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ABSTRACT

Commencing in 1976, a three-phase descriptive study of southern Tasmania's Huon Valley assessed provision of educational services and outcomes of education in terms of opportunities for young people. Sources of information included: review of existing sources; a follow-up study of three groups of area school leavers (1973, 1975, and 1976); interviews with young people and other community members; information and advice from regular meetings of area school principals; and a Search Conference on the future of the Huon, involving a cross-section of community members. The Huon was seen as undergoing rapid change: the agricultural base had been severely reduced; that part closest to Hobart was becoming part of the commuter-zone; further south, economic decline and a migration from the region were still taking place. It was found that differences in resource provision could not explain differences in educational attainment in the Huon as compared with other Tasmanian regions; the State department provided Huon with as much in the way of resources, especially personnel, as other regions in the State. Rather, the differences (or disadvantages) of country students lay more deeply embedded in the social context of country areas. Seven appendices and a bibliography are included. (BRR)

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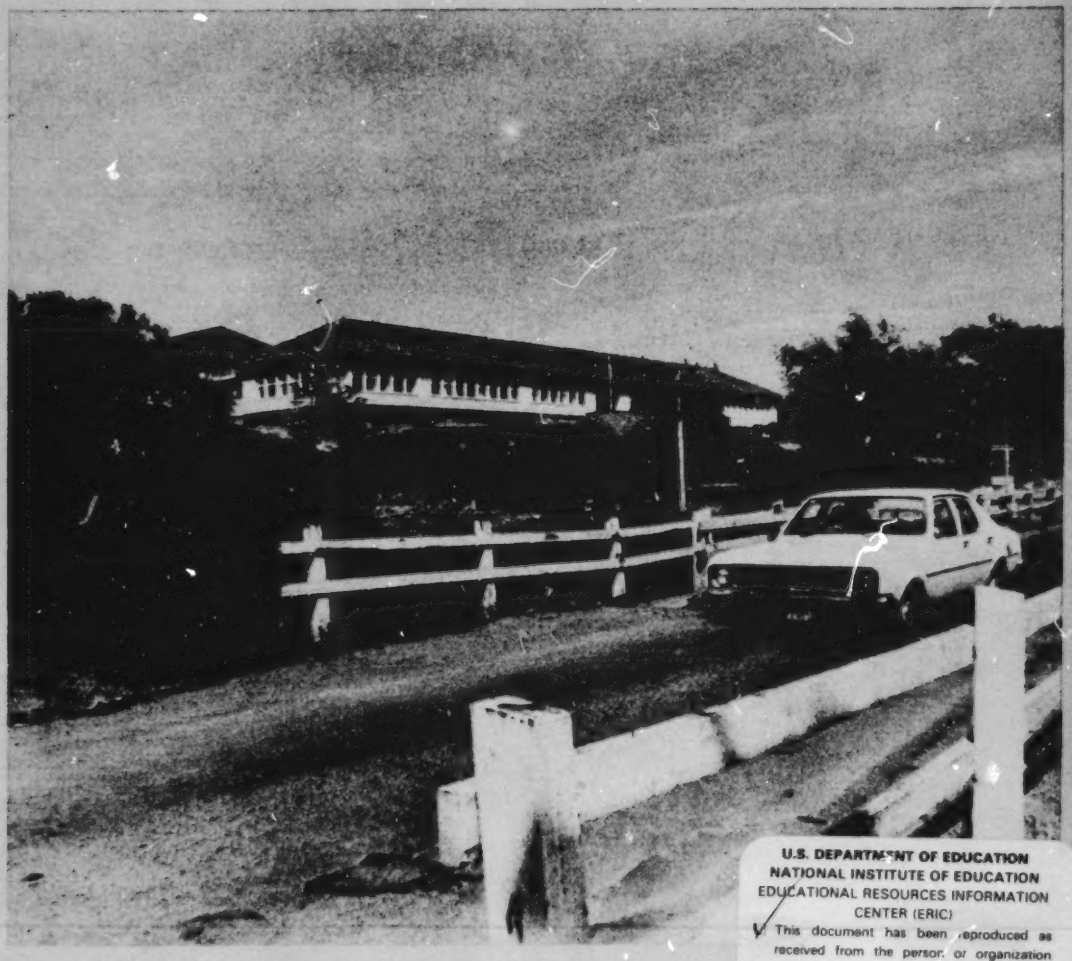
The Huon Valley Study

OPPORTUNITIES AND EDUCATIONAL PRIORITIES IN A TASMANIAN COUNTRY AREA



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THE HUON VALLEY STUDY

Opportunities and educational priorities in a Tasmanian country area.

Neville Behrens
Jan O'Grady
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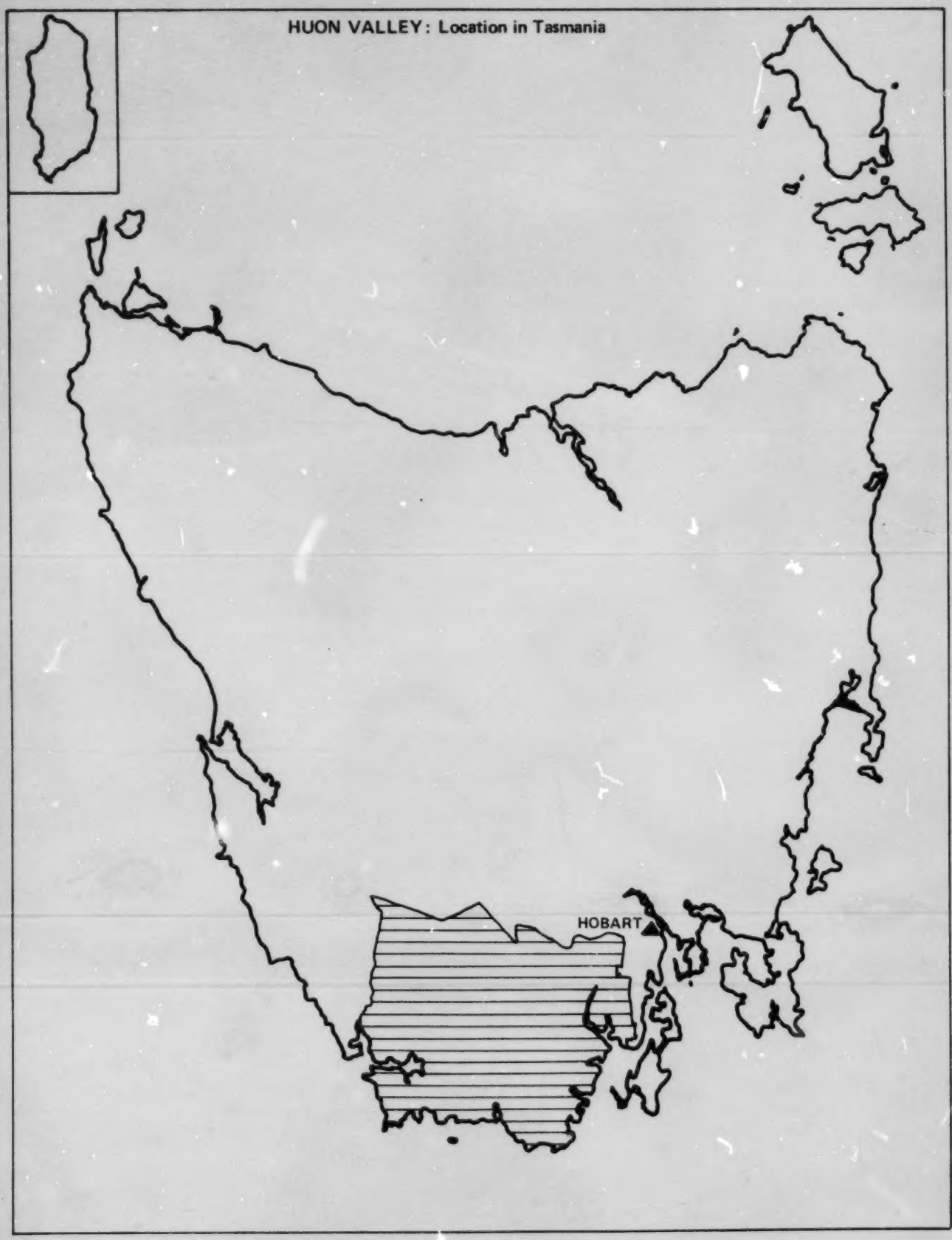
Hobart
Education Department of Tasmania
1978



(ii)

HUON VALLEY AREA
Lonnavale
Judbury
Lucaston
Grove
Longley
Lower Longley
Sandfly
Ranelagh
Glen Huon
HUONVILLE
Kaoota
HUON
Pelverata
Woodstock
Franklin
Cradoc
Port Cygnet
Kingsborough
Castle Forbes Bay
Glaziers Bay
CYGNET
GEEVESTON
Wattle Grove
Petchey Bay
Gardners Bay
Cairns Bay
Lymington
Major road
L.G.A. boundary
Surges Bay
Garden Is. Creek
0 5 10
km
Glendevie
HUON RIVER
Esperance
DOVER
Strathblane
Bruny
Hastings
Hythe
Lune River
Southport

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1. INTRODUCTION

This study deliberately focuses narrowly on education in a single, small country area. It is a descriptive study in some depth of the Huon Valley in southern Tasmania and, in particular, the provision of educational services and the outcomes of education in terms of opportunities for young people.

In many ways the study has been based on similar assumptions to those in an earlier research project in Tasmania that was carried out for the Poverty Inquiry.[1] The earlier follow-up study of 1500 twenty-three year old Tasmanians did not concentrate only on the years of schooling but was also concerned with the early years after leaving school and the experience of young people in the world of work. Similarly in the present study it is considered that knowledge of the experiences of young people after they have left school is important for those involved in education. Schooling will be inadequate unless it takes into account this knowledge. Accordingly, an important part of the Huon Study has been a follow-up of school leavers.[2] Our resultant understandings of the migration of young people from the area in a search for work and of the high level of unemployment among 15-19 year olds living in the valley (34 per cent in November 1976) is very important for all who are involved with the Huon area and its education.[3]

A second emphasis of the study has been on the provision of educational resources by the Education Department of Tasmania. Among the various hypotheses put forward to explain the unequal educational attainment and participation

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[1]Neville Behrens, "Schooling and Work : a study of twenty-three year olds in Tasmanian urban and rural communities," in School, Community and Work : Urban and rural aspects, commissioned by the Australian Government Commission of Inquiry into Poverty (Canberra: A.G.P.S., 1978).

[2]See below pp. 113-140.

[3]See below p. 38-41.

of country students is the belief that country schools may not receive their fair share of educational resources.[4] The provision of resources to country schools and students has seldom been examined in depth and it seemed a worthwhile focus for the study, especially in view of possible implications for the policies of the Education Department of Tasmania. Without attempting to summarize the results of the study, it is clear that an unequal distribution of educational services is not the only or even the major explanation of the problems of Huon Valley students. Unequal outcomes between country and city children would seem to have a deeper origin in the Australian social structure.[5]

A final feature of the study requires emphasis in this introduction. The project was funded by the Schools Commission in accordance with proposals made in the Report for the Triennium 1976-1978.[6] The study has formed the basis for the development of special projects initiated in the Huon area during 1977 with Schools Commission funds.[7] The procedure of carrying out a systematic investigation of educational provisions and needs as a preliminary step to the establishment of a program of action may be itself considered worthy of interest as a method of operation.

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[4] An outline of alternative hypotheses about the nature of educational disadvantage in country areas is given below, p. 142.

[5] The provision of educational services in the Huon is considered below, pp. 57-96.

[6] Australia. Schools Commission, Report for the Triennium 1976-1978 (Canberra: A.G.P.S., 1975), paragraph 6.27(b), p. 80.

[7] The projects are part of the Disadvantaged Country Areas Program commenced by the Schools Commission in 1977. See Australia. Schools Commission, Report: rolling triennium 1977-79 (Canberra: Schools Commission, 1976), pp. 65-67.

2. THE DEVELOPMENT AND METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

2.1 Schools Commission initiatives on country disadvantage

The first systematic attempt to tackle educational disadvantage in Australia was initiated by the Interim Committee of the Schools Commission in 1973. The "Karmel Report" focused on socio-economic disadvantage and provided special funds for individual schools located in socially-disadvantaged areas.[1] These schools were situated in both urban and rural areas and in all states but the Committee gave priority to "the amelioration of the serious conditions in inner-city areas" especially in the major metropolitan centres of Australia.[2]

The Interim Committee suggested that equality in the provision of educational resources "has become harder to maintain in country areas as the basic minimum of education has risen..."[3] It also indicated that country students have a lower level of participation in schooling and higher education and speculated about possible explanations of this phenomenon.[4] Despite these observations no program addressing itself specifically to country areas or country students was proposed.

In the years since the publication of the Karmel Report the problems of country schools and country students have come to attract a great deal of interest among educators. The needs of country education obviously went beyond the scope of the Disadvantaged Schools Program, with its focus on individual schools and on socio-economic aspects of disadvantage. In its 1975 Report the Schools Commission inclu-

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[1] Australia. Interim Committee for the Australian Schools Commission, Schools in Australia. Chairman : Peter H. Karmel (Canberra: A.G.P.S., 1973), Chapter 9 passim.

[2] Ibid., par. 9.34, p. 102.

[3] Ibid., par. 3.3, p. 16.

[4] Ibid., par. 3.13, p. 19.

ded a wide-ranging discussion of country education and proposed an extensive program of activities designed to improve country education.[5] The Education Department of Tasmania immediately established a planning committee to consider the implementation of the program in Tasmania. Although the Australian Government did not accept the proposals of the School Commission for implementation in 1976 the work of the Tasmanian planning committee was continued in anticipation of funding at a later date. It was decided to apply to the Commission for a Special Projects Grant for the purpose of intensive research into the problems of a country region, as had been suggested in the report. In August 1976 a research grant of $15 489 was approved and the survey began under the general direction of the Tasmanian Country Education Planning Committee.

The development of a country education program was again proposed in the 1976 report of the Schools Commission, although on a much more modest scale than originally suggested.[6] As expressed in this report :

> The Commission feels that there is now sufficient evidence to show that in rural areas account must be taken of factors additional to the socio-economic ones on which the Interim Committee's index rests. The various factors interact to produce a somewhat different complex of variables associated with educational disadvantage.[7]

The new proposal was for a special program in selected country areas identified by each State as particularly disadvantaged. The Schools Commission saw the allocation of $3.5 million to this program as allowing "pilot action in a number of the worst affected areas."[8] Of the national total in 1977 Tasmania received an allocation of $200,000, since supplemented to $235,500.

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[5]Australia. Schools Commission, Report for the Triennium 1976-1978 (Canberra: A.G.P.S., 1975), Chapter 6, pp. 73-81. Recommendations on proposed Commission funding is in par. 6.27, pp. 80-81.

[6]Australia. Schools Commission, Report: rolling triennium 1977-79 (Canberra: Schools Commission, 1976), pars. 7.6-7.13, pp. 65-67.

[7]Ibid., par. 7.6, p.65.

[8]Ibid., par. 7.9, p.66.

2.2 Selection of the survey area.

In Tasmania there are several country areas which would be suitable for examination and for special support from the School Commission program: the relatively isolated west coast or far north-west area; the depressed Fingal Valley; or the scattered and small settlements of the east coast can all be mentioned. Yet there was a general consensus among Tasmanian educators that the Huon area was clearly the region most warranting attention.

The selection of a study area foreshadowed the process described by the School Commission in its 1976 report :

> The funds are to be made available to improve the educational opportunities of children in one or more areas of each State where educational outcomes are particularly low. In view of the great variety of geographic situations to be found in Australia, decisions about the precise criteria to be employed in making the selection of areas, and the process of selection itself, must be carried out by those within the State who are most aware of the various geographic, social and economic factors operating and of the rural communities most affected by rural disadvantage.[9]

In making its selection of the Huon Valley for study and subsequent action the Country Education Planning Committee was influenced by the following considerations:

(a) information that the Huon Valley is more disadvantaged than other Tasmanian country areas on both socio-economic and educational measures. Country schools in Tasmania were grouped on the basis of geographical propinquity and a comparative analysis undertaken of these clusters using

- the socio-economic index developed for the Interim Committee of the Commission;
- the index of educational disadvantage developed by the Education Department of Tasmania for the disbursement of recurrent funds on a needs basis. This index was built up on the basis of five factors: child health; measures of general ability at Year 5; a subjective assessment of schools by regional superintendents; performance on tests of reading comprehension at Year 4; and a test of understanding of basic concepts in Year 1.

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[9] Ibid.

This analysis culminated in the listing of country regions in rank order. The Huon Valley clearly emerged as the Tasmanian region in greatest need of support.

(b) there is a general appreciation in Tasmania that the Huon Valley has experienced severe economic difficulties in recent years and that these have affected opportunities for young people in the area. These problems have received wide coverage in the Tasmanian media, particularly since 1970.

(c) the Huon Valley is a suitable area for study. With the exception of a secondary college, all types of government schools are represented in the area. In addition, the area has two schools in the Catholic system and a small Seventh Day Adventist primary school. The area is a distinctive geographical region that is clearly separated from other rural areas yet is situated in reasonable proximity to the research centre in Hobart.

2.3 Functions of the study.

The functions of this study have been indirectly described in the introduction to the report and in the preceding paragraphs of this section; throughout, the relationship between the study and the development of projects for implementation under the Country Education Program, have been emphasized. However, it may be appropriate to more directly and formally state the position. The basic function of the study has been to develop an economic, social, and educational framework in which the needs of those being educated within the Huon Valley can be identified and analyzed. The study has been seen as leading to the identification of specific projects capable of implementation with support from the Schools Commission and likely to meet the real needs of young people living in the area. In other words, the study has been intended to culminate in the creation of an "action model" for implementation in the Huon area.

As well as this specific relationship to programs for young people in the Huon, the study is seen as increasing knowledge about the nature of country disadvantage. Previous research has shown the diminished life chances of many country children but the factors underlying this inequality are still not well understood.[10] The emphasis of the study on the provision of educational resources by the Education Department and on the post-school experience of young people is seen as helping to clarify the nature of country disadvantage. In addition the study will hopefully have value for educational action in other rural areas: the needs identified in this study and the action model developed for the Huon may be capable of application in other country areas. This is consistent with the School Commission's emphasis on its country education program as allowing pilot action that "may be used to inform more extensive later initiatives."[11]

2.4 Methodology

The Huon study has been a complex exercise and its methodology cannot be simply described. Its design has not been that of the piece of educational research involving a straight-forward set of steps such as the preparation of a survey instrument, the administration of a questionnaire or interviews, analysis of results and the publication of a report. Rather, the study is made up of several quite distinct elements. This has the advantage of providing an extensive body of information about the Huon Valley and its education but it has also necessitated a much more extensive process of analyzing and ordering material than would usually be necessary. Sources of information for the study include the following :

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[10] For a discussion of the life chances of country children see Australian Government Commission of Inquiry into Poverty, Poverty and Education in Australia. Commissioner: R.T. Fitzgerald (Canberra: A.G.P.S., 1976), pp. 62-70.

[11] Australia. Schools Commission, Report for 1977-79, par. 7.9, p.66.

(a) The collection of information from a wide range of existing sources. An extensive body of published and unpublished material was obtained from the Education Department and other state government departments, from census and other data of the Australian Bureau of Statistics, from previous reports on the Huon Area, and from many other agencies and individuals.

(b) A follow-up study of three groups of school leavers from the schools of the area (1973, 1975 and 1976) was undertaken. A separate survey of parental occupations was carried out through the schools of the Huon Valley.

(c) Interviews of young people from the Huon and members of the local community were undertaken.

(d) Information and advice from regular meetings of the school principals of the area was used.

(e) A short Search Conference on the future of the Huon, involving a cross-section of members of the Huon community was organized.[12]

In analyzing this information and preparing a report, the different sources have not been separately reported. Rather, data from all sources has been logically re-ordered into the sections contained in this report.

The Huon Study commenced in September, 1976 and has been completed in three phases:
Phase 1. Data collection: this part of the study was largely concentrated in the period September to December, 1976. Some information was obtained later, for example the last follow-up of school leavers was at the end of March 1977. Data was collected both in Hobart, using published and unpublished information held in government departments and instrumentalities, and by field officers working within the

[12] See Appendix 1 for a report of this conference

Huon itself. An important advantage of the study was that both field workers were permanent residents of the Huon area.

Phase 2. Analysis of data, identification of needs and proposed projects. This part of the study was concentrated in the period from January to March, 1977 and culminated in the preparation of an Interim Report which formed the basis for decision making by the Country Education Committee about its program in the Huon Area during 1977. A summary of this Interim Report was circulated to all teachers in the Huon Valley.

Phase 3. Further analysis of data and preparation of final report. Since April 1977 work has continued on information obtained during the study, especially a comparison between the Huon and three other Tasmanian regions with respect to the provision of educational resources. At the same time the Country Education Committee undertook the recruitment of a project team to begin the implementation of projects identified in the study.

In concluding this outline of methodology, reference should be made to the meetings of principals from all the schools in the area. This group was convened in the early stages of the study and has performed most valuable functions: in advising the study team, in identifying priorities for projects, and in providing the main mechanism for involving the schools in the area. In retrospect the study team considers that it should have paid greater attention to the involvement of teachers in the schools and of the general Huon community. Increased emphasis should have been given to direct contact with individuals from both groups and to consultation with school staffs. Nevertheless the very important role in communication that was carried out by the meetings of principals should be emphasized.

3. GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE HUON VALLEY

The Huon Valley is located close to Hobart, the largest centre being only 35 kilometres away, but the region is clearly separated from the capital by an intervening zone of hill country. For convenience, the area has been defined in terms of local-government units but it also forms a distinctive geographical region, centred on the lower basin of the Huon River system. The population of 10,110 is concentrated in the coastal area and river valleys in the less heavily-timbered eastern part of the study area. Mountains lie to the west where the climate is wetter and the land still covered with dense rainforest.

Much of the fascination of the Huon lies in the pattern of occupancy since its first settlement 150 years ago. In 1829 a convict station to mine coal was established at Southport, in the south of the region about 100 kilometres from Hobart, but the main period of settlement commenced when farmers began to purchase land in the mid-1830's.[1] Landing from the sea, the early settlers hewed out small clearings in the eucalypt forest to plant potatoes and vegetables and provide for their cow and fowls.[2] The main income at this time came from timber, the Huon being the centre of the early sawmilling industry in Tasmania.[3] In the period up to 1860 most transport was by water, both within the Huon and externally to Hobart.[4]

The most rapid period of occupance of the Huon took place after 1860 with smallholders taking up farms that were

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[1] D. Burton, A Short History of the Huon (n.p.: Huon Tourism Council, 1976), p.2.

[2] Anthony R. Dell, "The development of agricultural specialization in the Huonville District, 1840-1967" (B.A. Honours thesis, University of Tasmania, n.d.), pp. 103-105.

[3] J.M. Gilbert, "Forestry", in Atlas of Tasmania, ed. J.L. Davies (Hobart: Lands and Surveys Department, 1965), p.67.

[4] Burton, p.5.

mostly less than 100 acres in size.[5] Originally, fruit trees had been grown as part of the typical pioneer farm-structure mentioned in the previous paragraph but they came to completely dominate the economic life of the region.[6] The early orchards came into production at a time when the gold rush in Victoria provided a ready market. Subsequently Tasmania was severely depressed and there was a slump in the production of such important commodities as potatoes and timber but the market for apples continued to expand. Exports to England commenced in the 1880's and by the 1920's orchards occupied 95 per cent of the cropped land in the Huon district.[7] This dominance receded somewhat in the next thirty years with a retreat from the marginal farms of the less-favoured hillslopes but fruit growing remained dominant until the 1960's.[8] The dramatic reversal of orcharding since then will be described later in this report but the problem of establishing alternative agricultural activities on the small holdings of the study area needs to be emphasized.

Fifteen years ago the apple-growing area of the Huon heavily influenced the image many Australians in other states had of Tasmania. Small, family-operated orchards dominated the most closely-settled rural area in Tasmania.[9] Orcharding was a highly-specialized activity with other products in a completely subordinate position.[10] Of other economic activities only fishing and timber were important. Now, however, the character of the Huon is rapidly changing. Instead of a single crop being dominant, many orchards have been grubbed out. The former uniqueness of the agriculture and the land-

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[5]Peter Scott, "Land Settlement", in Atlas of Tasmania, pp. 42-44. See also R.J. Solomon, Tasmania (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1972), p.15.

[6]On the historical development of orcharding see Dell, passim.

[7]Solomon, p. 71.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Peter Scott, "Farming Type Regions of Tasmania," New Zealand Geographer 17 (1961):169. See also Peter Scott, "Service Centres" in Atlas of Tasmania, p.55.

[10]Solomon, p. 81.

scape has made the decline all the more devastatingly evident. That part closest to Hobart is becoming a part of the commuter-zone of the Tasmanian capital and is no longer declining in population but further south economic decline and a migration from the region is still taking place.

Within a hundred kilometres of Hobart there is now a region with severe economic problems and a problematical future. The present study of education and opportunities for young people has been designed with this setting in mind: it should be seen as an exploration of links between education and the socio-economic features of the Huon.

4. POPULATION AND EMPLOYMENT IN THE HUON VALLEY

4.1 Population trends

Size and distribution of the population

In presenting this study it is important to stress not only the distinctiveness of the Huon Valley but also that it is, in Australian terms, a very small country region. In 1976 the study area had a population of 10,110 persons, or 2.5 per cent of the Tasmanian total.[1]

The population of the Huon has remained close to the waterways that were so important in its early settlement. The Huon "has the greatest density of rural-farm population in the island",[2] but people live in distinct communities with a clear identity of their own. The Huon area has no fully-fledged town but four minor towns which "originally grew up as sawmilling and shipping centres; each has since continued to serve its own clearly defined area."[3] In terms of educational and other services Huonville dominates the valley but, as the following table shows, this is not reflected in its size.

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[1]The study area is defined as the three local government areas of Huon, Port Cygnet and Esperance. The population is the total for these municipalities and was obtained from Australian Bureau of Statistics. Tasmanian Office, Census of Population and Housing, 30th June, 1976 : preliminary characteristics (Bulletin DC 4, May 1977), p.2.

[2]Peter Scott, "Service Centres", in Atlas of Tasmania, ed. J.L. Davies (Hobart: Lands and Surveys Department, 1965), p.55.

[3]Ibid.

Table 4.1
Huon Valley : centres of more than 200 persons in 1976 [4]

Huonville-Ranelagh	1340
Geeveston	900
Cygnet	720
Franklin	530
Dover	408

The continuing existence of strong district loyalties is of some relevance when considering the location of educational services, for example in the retention of small district schools offering education at both primary and secondary level within a district.

Population decline

The population of Tasmania as a whole is growing very slowly. The most rapid period of increase in the last hundred years was in the immediate post-war period, when immigration from overseas reached a peak. Since then the rate of growth has slowed and, at present, the State's population is increasing by less than one per cent a year.[5] But this overall pattern obscures important differences within the State. Since the second world war the major urban centres have grown much more rapidly than the rest of the State while some rural areas, including the Huon Valley, have experienced a loss of population. In the Huon area there has been a nett loss of population in each inter-censal period since 1954 (see Table 4.2).

[4] Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1976 Census, Population and Dwellings in Local Government Areas and Urban Centres (Preliminary) Tasmania Catalogue No. 2406.0, pp. 9-10.

[5] Australian Bureau of Statistics, Tasmanian Office, Tasmanian Year Book No. 11 : 1977 (Hobart : ABS, 1977), pp.182-183.

It will be observed from the table that the period of sharp population loss was the five-year period, 1966 to 1971. Of those leaving since 1961 about seven in ten departed during this five year period. A significant loss can be attributed to a disastrous bush fire which occurred in 1967.[6] These years also correspond with the time of most rapid decline in the apple and pear industry and it is readily apparent that the major reason for the loss was

Table 4.2

Population Change in Tasmania, 1947-1976[7]

Area	1947-54	1954-61	1961-66	1966-71	1971-76
Urban Areas*	+26.7%	+20.3%	+6.9%	+8.5%	+3.5%
Rural Areas	+13.1%	+ 5.3%	+5.0%	+0.5%	+2.8%
Huon Valley	- 6.2%	- 0.2%	-0.8%	-10.6%	-2.2%

*Here defined as the urban areas of Hobart (including Kingston and Bridgewater), Launceston, Burnie-Somerset and Devonport.

a decline in employment opportunities. It seems clear that the period of population loss from the valley is now over and from interviews in the community, it is likely that there has been a slight overall increase in the population in the last two or three years.

These figures do not reflect the total movement of people into and out of the Huon Valley. There is little available information on losses and gains but it was suggested in interviews conducted during the survey that, in the early seventies, about three persons left the area for every one arriving. The ratio is now seen as being more in favour of new residents but the implication of the degree of movement is the same: the Huon is not a quiet,

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[6] See "Fire Disaster of 7 February (1967)" in ABS Tasmanian Office, Tasmanian Year Book No. 2 : 1968 (Hobart: ABS, 1968), pp. 590-602.

[7] These rates were calculated on the basis of census information from the various years.

stable rural area in a state of slow decline but a community that is changing in character and presenting a fascinating balance between families who have lived in the area, often for several generations, and newcomers with many different characteristics and attitudes. As suggested in a special study of new landholders in the Huon:

> They are generally young and fill the age gap left by rural out-migrants, most have urban backgrounds, they tend to be well-educated, and many have professional or technical jobs.[8]

Since 1966 there has been a reduction of almost 25 per cent in the number of young people below the age of twenty living in the Huon.[9] In 1966 there were 1538 children in the five to nine age-group living in the valley; 10 years later there were only 810 15 to 19 year olds, a nett loss of almost half. The age group now aged 20 to 24 is similarly diminished, again reflecting the need for many young people to leave the valley to find employment. On the other hand the number of persons in the age groups between 25-40 has been almost stable since 1966: it is considered that new residents are concentrated in this age group and that their arrival has almost balanced out-migration of previous residents of this age.[10]. That such new arrivals have young families is reflected in a slight increase in the number of five to nine year olds since 1971. This is a useful reminder of the potential impact of newcomers on the schools of the area. Patterns of population change for persons aged 40 or older are less clear. The

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[8]Rona K. Gardner, "New Landholders in the Huon" (B.A. Honours Thesis, University of Tasmania, 1976) p. iii.

[9] This paragraph is based on Australian Bureau of Statistics Census material, including Census of Population and Housing, 30 June 1971, Bulletin 7, Part 6 (reference no. 2.89.6), p. 148, 151, 160 and"A.B.S., 1976 Census, Unpublished Tabulations on Characteristics of Population (Preliminary) for Esperance, Huon and Port Cygnet Municipalities and for Total Tasmania".

[10]Rona K. Gardner, New Landholders in the Huon, p. 40, 43.

proportion of 60-70 year-olds is some indication of the characteristic excess of older persons in a depopulating rural area.[11] There has been a nett increase since 1966 in the number of Huon residents aged 60 or more, partially reflecting their natural reluctance or inability to leave the area. Detailed analysis of these trends must await publication of additional 1976 Census tabulations but the preceding discussion is some confirmation of the limited opportunities for young people in the Huon and of its attraction for "greenies" in their late twenties and thirties.

Patterns of population change within the Huon

An examination of changes in population over the last 25 years shows significant variations from one part of the Huon to another. Overall, the loss of population from the Port Cygnet municipality has been much heavier than from other local government areas (25 per cent loss since 1961, compared to 11 per cent in the Huon Municipality and seven per cent in Esperance). In the Huon and Port Cygnet municipalities loss was heaviest between 1966 and 1971, but in both areas there has been a consistent decline since 1954 except in the last few years. Now in both areas outmigration has been balanced or more than balanced by new arrivals. The southern-most and most remote municipality, Esperance, shows a different pattern. Between 1954 and 1966 there was a significant increase in population, perhaps reflecting increased activity in the timber industry. Since 1966 there has been a lost of population and this is now much heavier than in the rest of the Huon Valley.

An examination of small localities (census collectors districts) confirms the conclusions about population change stated in the previous paragraph (see Figure 4.1).

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[11] Ibid, p. 40.

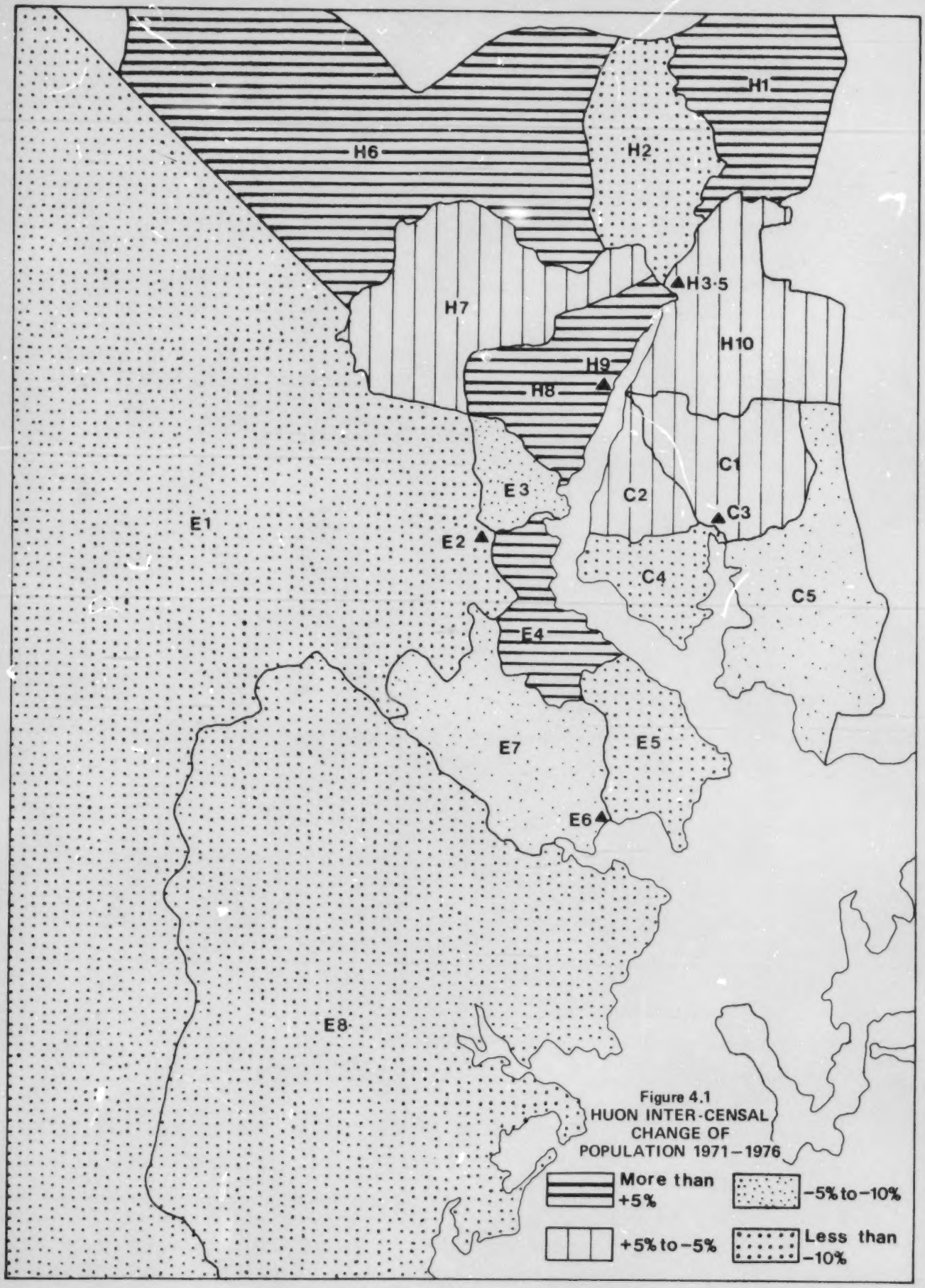
H1
H2
H6
H7
H3·5
H10
H9
H8
C1
E3
C2
C3
E1
E2
C4
C5
E4
E7
E5
E6
E8
Figure 4.1
HUON INTER-CENSAL
CHANGE OF
POPULATION 1971–1976
More than
+5%
–5% to –10%
+5% to –5%
Less than
–10%

Table 4.3

Population change by local government area, 1961-1976[12]

L.G.A.	1961	1966	1971	1976
Esperance	3436	3740 +8.9%	3508 -6.2%	3180 -9.4%
Huon	5460	5264 -3.6%	4756 -9.7%	4870 +2.4%
Port Cygnet	2754	2550 -7.4%	2070 -18.8%	2060 -0.5%
Total Huon Valley	11650	11554 -0.8%	10334 -10.6%	10110 -2.2%

Generally, the farming districts closest to Hobart have maintained their population since 1971.[13] On the other hand only one of the localities which are situated more than 50 kilometres from Hobart has increased in population since 1971. The two minor towns of Huonville and Cygnet, both relatively close to Hobart, have grown since 1971 while centres further away have lost population. Proximity to Hobart appears to be significant, perhaps because it has made possible the occupation of orchards by part-time farmers who undertake the daily journey to Hobart for work. This process of occupance has been described by a local government authority in the Huon :

> Values have been pushed up by Hobart and other out of the district people moving in to take over properties local people don't want any more.
>
> People are moving from the city on to the small farms, particularly those with a house and up to 10 acres.

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[12] Figures in this table are derived from bulletins published by Australian Bureau of Statistics for each Census.

[13] Australian Bureau of Statistics. 1976 Census of Population and Housing : population and dwellings - preliminary check data - all collectors districts (unpublished tabulation), p. 14.

> Most of the newcomers can't be bothered with stock - they usually grow their vegetables and enjoy their bit of bush.[14]

In the southern part of the survey area economic problems are now more evident, because alternatives to the traditional activities of orcharding and timber are not readily available. Other local employment or the possibility of daily commuting to Hobart are largely absent. While the decline in this area may level off it seems unlikely that growth will occur in the near future. In the Huon and Cygnet municipalities it seems quite likely that there will be a continuing and, perhaps, accelerating period of population growth, especially when the upgrading of the highway between Hobart and Huonville has been completed. This trend is of importance for educational planning, especially in relation to the continued provision of more than one government school offering secondary education in the Huon Valley.

4.2 Social characteristics

Characteristics of the population

At the time of writing little information from the 1976 Census has become available but it is possible to indicate some of the broad characteristics of the Huon population. Firstly, it should be emphasized that Tasmania as a whole has a much smaller proportion of migrants than other States. In the State 88 per cent of the population was born in Australia; in the Huon the proportion is 92 per cent.[15] Again there are very few persons of aboriginal descent in the Huon.[16] So we are concerned in this area

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[14] Evidence from the Council Clerk of Cygnet to the State Grants Commission. The Mercury, 20 April, 1977.

[15] Australian Bureau of Statistics. Tasmanian Office. 1976 Census Preliminary Characteristics, p.9.

[16] In the three municipalities there were 17 aboriginals in 1971 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1971 Census, unpublished tabulation).

with a native-born white population and some of the groups identified in the Poverty Inquiry as "at risk" are under-represented in the area.[17]

In one important respect the population is distinctive. One of the local government areas, Cygnet, is much more Catholic in religion than any other Tasmanian municipality and the Catholic Church is the major denomination of that area.[18] One of the implications of this phenomenon is that the Catholic school is much stronger in comparison with the government school in Cygnet than anywhere else in the State. But while the Catholic children from the area usually remain in Cygnet for their schooling to Year 10 most of the other children are bussed out to a high school in another district.

An examination of the age distribution of the Huon population brings out several important demographic features of the area (see Diagram 1). When compared with the population of Tasmania as a whole, children younger than 15 are over-represented, but the loss of young people after the completion of schooling is shown by the under-representation of persons aged between 15 and 30. In this respect it should be observed that one of the recurring themes of this report is the restricted local employment opportunities for young people. The consequences for the life of the Huon community of losing young people with energy and vitality should also be emphasized. There are more persons aged between 30 and 45 than in the Tasmanian population, perhaps because the considerable in-migration of people

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[17] In the fifth main report of the inquiry various groups who suffer disadvantage in the schooling system were identified. See Australian Government Commission of Inquiry into Poverty, Poverty and Education in Australia. Commissioner : R.T. Fitzgerald (Canberra: A.G.P.S. 1976), Chapters 3 and 6.

[18] In 1971 46.5 per cent of the total Port Cygnet population were Catholics, 36.4 per cent Anglicans and 17.1 per cent others. From Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 30 June 1971. Bulletin 7. Characteristics of the Population and Dwellings: local government areas. Part 6: Tasmania (Reference No.2.89.6), p.160.

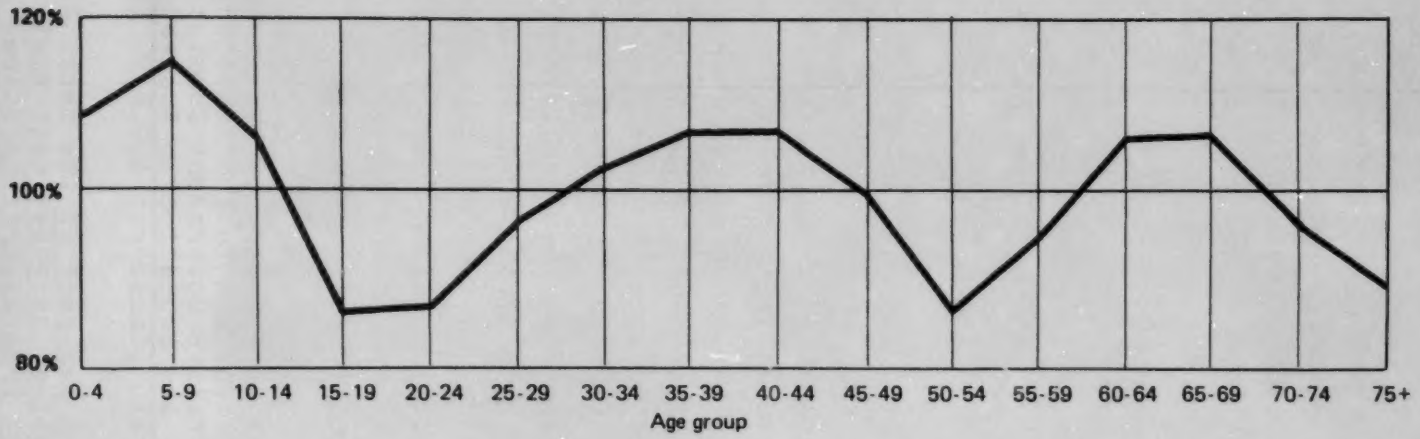

DIAGRAM 1

Age Distribution: HUON PROPORTION IN AGE GROUP AS A PERCENTAGE OF TASMANIAN PROPORTION, 1976

Source: see postnote 9 on p.16.

looking for a rural environment in which to live may be largely of men and women in this age group. Persons aged 50 to 59 are under-represented in the Huon, perhaps because of the loss of formerly well-established farming families due to the decline in orcharding. Differences among older people are not large and their numbers in the Huon are perhaps too small to draw any significant conclusions.

Level of social disadvantage

Numerous research studies provide evidence of a significant relationship between social disadvantage and educational disadvantage and it is widely accepted that a student's achievement at school will be very strongly influenced by his or her socio-economic background.

In recognition of this, the Interim Committee of the Australian Schools Commission developed an index aimed at indicating the various levels of socio-economic disadvantage in schools throughout Australia. The index,[19] which is based on data from the 1971 Census, refers to the population characteristics of school feeder areas, not to the actual school population. Hence, it is an important indicator of the general distribution of social disadvantage throughout Australia.

On the basis of this index it is possible to group Tasmanian schools into quintiles. Of the five groups, the top two were considered to be relatively advantaged schools and the bottom two relatively disadvantaged schools; Huonville High and Huonville Primary were in the intermediate category and the remainder fall into the two lowest categories. Dover District School and Judbury and Franklin

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[19]For a more detailed comment on the Schools Commission index see, Neville Behrens, "Schooling and Work: a study of twenty-three year olds in Tasmanian urban and rural communities" in School, Community and Work: Urban and rural aspects, commissioned by the Australian Government Commission of Inquiry into Poverty (Canberra: A.G.P.S., 1978), pp. 8-10.

Primary Schools ranked with the State's most highly disadvantaged schools.

The Tasmanian Education Department used the Schools Commission socio-economic index as a basis for developing a more complex index aimed at determining levels of educational disadvantage in individual schools.[20] All government schools were given a rating of one to five and the rating is used for the differential disbursement of Schools Commission funds. The distribution of the Huon schools on the Tasmanian educational needs index corresponds very closely with the distribution on the Schools Commission's socio-economic index. None of the Huon schools are in the advantaged schools category and only the two Huonville schools fall into the intermediate group.

A further indicator of social disadvantage in the Huon is the percentage of students who receive loan issue supplies from the Education Department. As Table 4.4 shows, the proportion of Huon students receiving these supplies has risen steadily since 1973 and the rate in the Huon is consistently higher than in schools in other regions of Tasmania, including the rural Derwent Valley region.

As an indicator of socio-economic need in the Huon, it is possible that the table is actually an understatement. Firstly, the figures refer only to those applications which were officially approved. There is in fact a gap (in 1976, it was five per cent in the Huon) between the total number of applicants and those whose applications are approved. Secondly, the rural recession in the Huon is a relatively recent phenomenon and the historical tradition in Australia has been to associate the provision of social welfare benefits with the urban dweller, not the rural dweller. The concept of poverty may be relatively new to residents of the Huon and it seems likely that there are families in the region who are

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[20] See above p. 5.

unwilling and reluctant to acknowledge their need for outside help. This is confirmed by a social worker who spent some time working in the Huon and found that many families in the Huon can only be persuaded with great difficulty to accept the benefits to which they are entitled.

Table 4.4

Recipients of loan issue supplies as a percentage of total school enrolments in four selected regions of Tasmania.*

School region	1973	1974	1975	1976
Huon Valley	9%	16%	15%	14%
Derwent Valley	5%	8%	7%	8%
Eastern Shore	8%	11%	12%	11%
West Tamar	-	-	6%	7%

*Note : For details of the schools in each region see Appendix 4.

4.3 Features of the local economy

For generations of Tasmanians the Huon Valley has been synonymous with the production of apples and pears. For almost a hundred years apples from the Huon have been exported overseas, particularly to the United Kingdom, and these exports have been the major source of income for the area. This section of the report will show how orcharding has declined and suggest some of the reasons for the decline. It will also outline alternatives to orcharding and speculate about the economic future of the area. It is not an attempt to provide a comprehensive analysis of all forms of economic activity in the area.

Changes in the apple and pear industry

In describing the Huon Valley earlier in this report the traditional dominance of specialized orcharding in the area was emphasized. Not only was the landscape

pattern dominated by orchards and many families directly engaged in this activity, but centres in the Huon were largely concerned with the provision of services to the farms of the area. In such a context the problems that have assailed the apple and pear growers in the Huon have had a profound effect on the whole community.

The following statistics demonstrate the changes to the industry since the boom years of the early 1960's:

* in 1961 there were 777 orchards of more than one acre in the Huon area; these carried a total of 1,483,000 apple trees and 54,000 pear trees. By 1975 the region supported 271 orchards, carrying 875,000 apple trees and 23,000 pear trees. 21

* As these figures show the decline in the number of orchards has been more dramatic than the decline in the number of trees. The smaller, less-viable orchards have been merged to form larger units. In Southern Tasmania the number of orchards producing more than 20,000 bushells was about the same in 1976 as in 1970, whereas smaller orchards had decreased from 666 to 203 in the same period. 22

* Exports to the United Kingdom from Tasmania reached a peak of more than three million bushels in 1962.[23] In 1976 these had fallen to 758,000 bushels. In 1961 Tasmanian apples made up 35 per cent of all those going to the United Kingdom from the southern hemisphere. By 1976[24] the proportion had fallen to 13 per cent. Attempts to develop south-east Asian markets have not come close to replacing the traditional European markets. 25.

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[21] Grant, J. McBain, Statistics of the Tasmanian Apple and Pear Industry, No. 4, 1961-1976 (Hobart; 1976), p. 1.

[22] Ibid., p. 8.

[23] Ibid., p. 20.

[24] Ibid., p. 23.

[25] Ibid., p. 20.

* Farm income levels in the Huon Valley have fallen. In 1971-72 the net operating income per farm in the Huon averaged $5560, a 37 per cent drop on the 1965-66 figure of $8766. The average farm income during 1971-72 declined to $2899. In that year government support per farm was greater than net farm income ($3518 per farm compared with $2899). Further, of the net farm income it was estimated that 61 per cent was "off-farm income", that is from work other than that done on the farm or from produce sold from that property. 26.

On the basis of the surveys and statistics examined in this report it would be unrealistic to express confidence about the future prospects of orcharding in the Huon. Trends to the end of the 1976 season suggested a lower production and a continuing downturn in average farm incomes. This was seen to follow from such factors as depressed domestic market prices, general inflationary trends and cost increases, lower receipts from livestock and doubts about the maintenance of government assistance.[27] Figures for the 1977 season are not yet available but improved United Kingdom prices and a new system of marketing appear to have given growers more confidence about the future. Even so, with greater efficiency and more capitalization, the future is unlikely to see increased employment in orcharding. This industry will not provide the additional jobs required in the area, particularly for young people.

Alternative forms of farming to orcharding

The first alternative that has occurred in the Huon is that small farms have gone out of business and their orchards have been taken over by larger producers. There is some statistical evidence to show that there are

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[26] Australia. Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Income Levels and Adjustment Patterns in a Rural Community: Huon Valley, Tasmania (Canberra: A.G.P.S., 1974), p. 19.

[27] Australia. Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Apple and Pear Growing Industry: statistical results (Canberra: A.G.P.S., 1975), p.5.

economies of scale within the industry with costs of production being lower on the bigger orchards.[28] Many farmers are no longer able to support their families by full-time farming and have taken on outside work as well.

In January 1973 the Tasmanian Parliament passed the Fruit Growing Reconstruction Assistance Act which gave assistance to growers who wished to partially or wholly remove their orchards. The idea behind this legislation was to allow a farmer to leave an uneconomic industry and to enter into other forms of agriculture. In the three Huon municipalities 2526 acres of orchard were completely removed up to October 1975 and 1843 acres of trees taken from orchards where the growers wished to retain some orchard area whilst increasing the land they had available for other purposes. During this period the finance approved for removals totalled $1.2 million.

In the early stages of widespread difficulty, encouragement to enter the beef cattle industry was given to a number of ex-growers and some of their fellows who had only partially removed their orchards. The recent downturn in the fortunes of the beef cattle industry has left many of these farmers in a poor financial situation.[29]

Problems facing Huon farmers who wish to diversify are considerable and embrace financial, demographic and geographical aspects. The demographic problem is basically that, as of 1973, an estimated 61 per cent of the district's population lived on small, closely-spaced farms often comprised of a number of separate blocks. In such a

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[28] Australia. Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Income Levels and Adjustment Patterns, pp. 33-35.

[29] From March 1975 to March 1977 there was a reduction of 16 per cent in the number of beef cattle in the Huon. (Australian Bureau of Statistics, Livestock Statistics: Tasmania for each year).

situation, there is little chance of the present farmers being able to extend their holdings for large-scale enterprises, such as pastoral activities. The geographical problem is related to landforms. In the Huon Valley timbered and very steep land, classified as waste land by the 1973 B.A.E. survey, accounted for 50 per cent of the total land area of the surveyed farms.[30] To quote the findings of the survey:

> Given the existence of these farm characteristics the alternative farm opportunities for apple and pear orchards in Tasmania seem to be rather limited. Some minor increases in berry fruit and vegetable production may be possible in Tasmania but in the event of present orchard areas being withdrawn from production only limited acreage would be available for alternative use. This acreage is scattered and interspersed with bushland of little agricultural potential. Any pastoral enterprise pursued on existing farms would be on a small scale and would contribute much less to incomes than apples and pears have done in past years. In addition, it would not solve the problem of absorbing labour resources released from pome fruit production. 31.

There have been a number of suggestions for alternative forms of agricultural enterprise, many meriting further investigation. The problem with most is twofold: money and expertise. It is a common error of the city dweller to believe that people in primary industry can turn their hand to the growing of any crop. Most of the farmers in the Huon Valley are specialist orchardists, many have done nothing else, and a system of acquiring new farming knowledge may be required. All alternative forms of agriculture require financial outlays. Those knowledgeable in the field of rural investment have suggested that it will be very difficult to obtain private

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[30] Australia. Bureau of Agricultural Economics, The Australian Apple and Pear Industry: a review (Canberra: A.G.P.S., 1973).

[31] Ibid.

funding and so the main responsibility of funding viable alternatives may have to fall on the State Government.

Other economic activities

Tourism

Up until ten years ago, the apple and pear orchards of the Huon Valley were a major tourist attraction in southern Tasmania. The orchards today no longer hold the same appeal but the Huon remains, potentially, a major tourist and recreational centre. It offers unspoilt scenic beauty combined with extensive natural resources, ideal for bush-walking, trail riding, aquatic sports and hunting as well as good inland and sea fishing. The South-west National Park, 170 kilometres from Hobart, is the second largest reserve in the State and provides experienced bush-walkers with some of the best walking in the country. It covers 189,000 hectares of diverse wilderness and attracts an estimated 50,000 visitors each year.[32] At Hastings there are the famous Newdegate limestone caves with the Exit Caves and the historic, narrow-gauge Ida Bay railway in the same vicinity. A recently established vineyard at Cygnet has also proved a popular tourist attraction, as have the open markets held regularly in Huonville.

At present, the majority of tourists who visit the Huon are mainly interested in sight-seeing. Active involvement in outdoor activities is much less common, with the result that the region's great potential for such activities is still largely undeveloped. Accommodation is available within the Huon, but it tends to be fairly scarce and limited in nature. There is little call for luxurious or large-scale accommodation as most visitors to the region tend to be "day trippers" from Hobart.

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[32] Tasmania. Department of Tourism, Southern Tasmania Tourism Development Plan (Hobart: Department of Tourism, 1977), Table 4.

Currently, specific plans for the development of tourism in the Huon appear to be limited. Proposals exist to up-grade resources in the South-West National Park and there is a proposed development by the Education Department of a recreational base camp and other facilities at Cockle Creek. The recently published Southern Tasmanian Tourism Development Plan[33] recommends the up-grading of the Hastings caves but suggests that a detailed study of the tourist needs of the region be carried out before major initiatives are taken.

It is anticipated that in the next 10 years or so there will be a change of emphasis in tourism, with an increasing demand for recreational opportunities in natural environments. This will probably lead to development of recreation facilities in the Huon, but is unlikely to generate a large number of employment opportunities or contribute greatly to the economic development of the region. Nature enthusiasts and sportsmen are not likely to be "big spenders" and their accommodation needs will be largely met by caravan parks, camping reserves, youth hostels and host homes, most of which can be run with a minimum of staff. Those most likely to benefit from increased tourist activity in the Huon will continue to be people involved in providing meals and food processing with most of the job offerings of an unskilled nature. Local cottage industries and craftsmen will also benefit to some extent. These industries are already quite well established and, while the demand for locally made goods will probably increase, it is unlikely that there will be a large increase in the number of people employed in the industry.

Increasing the level of tourist activity in the Huon will not be accomplished without some difficulties, many of which are tied up with the conflicting demands of

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[33] Ibid.

forestry and the tourist industry. In the Huon, much of the region's tourist potential is dependent on the retention of wilderness areas and conservationists are strongly opposed to the use of such areas for forestry. At the same time, there are many families in the Huon, particularly in the Esperance municipality, who are dependent on forestry for their livelihood. The Esperance Council is understandably concerned that restricted forestry development will lead to continued population loss from the area, which will inevitably mean a loss of revenue for the Council.[34] This in turn will mean a lack of funds available at the local level for the development of the region's tourist potential and the funds are needed badly. It should also be remembered that in many cases forestry roads provide the only access to wilderness areas, but there is a simultaneous concern that the big trucks hauling logs to the city are damaging roads in country areas, to the detriment of tourism.

Finally, reference should be made to the views on tourism expressed by participants in the Huon Search Conference. The main feeling of the Conference was the need to retain the Huon's rural atmosphere and to safeguard the residents' way of life. On present indications, it appears as if the type of tourist activity envisaged for the Huon will not greatly affect either of these things.

Forestry

Forestry has always played a prominent role in the Huon Valley. In the first half of the last century the region was the centre of the early saw-milling industry in Tasmania, although orcharding gradually took over as the valley's major industry.

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[34] See, for example, A.H. Thodey, "The Significance of the South-West to the Municipality of Esperance," in Journal Tasmanian Wilderness Society, No. 5 (May, 1977), pp. 5-7.

Today forestry is still an important activity in the Huon, particularly in the South-west in Esperance Municipality, although the past six or seven years have seen general decline in the industry. The main reason for the decline has been the implementation of policies aimed at cutting back saw-log production in the State, made necessary by excessive logging in the past. In 1969/70 there were 39 operative saw mills in the Huon - 19 in Esperance, 14 in Huon and six in Port Cygnet.[35] By 1976/77 the number had dropped by almost half, with the greatest loss being in Esperance.

The Huon seems to have been hit harder than most of Tasmania, as there was a 32 per cent loss in the number of saw mills in Tasmania for the period 1970-77, compared with a 46 per cent loss in the Huon Valley. Contributing factors to the decline of forestry in the Huon were the change-over by fruit growers from wooden crates to cardboard containers and the increasing use of radiata pine and chipboard as flooring, rather than the native hardwoods which are the only trees grown in the Huon.

It is difficult to establish the present level of forestry activity in the Huon. The table below shows the number of people employed in the forestry industry in the area at the end of 1976, but it is likely that the number of sawmill employees has dropped considerably since then. The decision made in 1977 to cut saw-log production in Tasmania by a further 20 per cent will have already had an effect and in the past 12 months at least two mills have closed - I.X.L. closed their mill at Geeveston, with the estimated loss of 20 jobs, and Crisp & Gunn closed another mill at Glen Huon and now cart their logs to their mill at Mornington.

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[35] Australian Bureau of Statistics. Tasmanian Office. Sawmilling, Woodchipping, etc. Statistics - Tasmania - August 1977. (Reference No. 8203.6), p. 2

Timber Industry Employment as at[36] 9.11.1976

	Esperance	Huon	Cygnet	Total
Logging contractors	112	22	6	140
Sawmill employees	97	73	5	175
APM Ltd. Port Huon Mill [37]	78			78
				393

The position in the Huon has probably stabilized now, but there seems little likelihood of any improvement before 1990, when the new crop of trees will be ready for harvesting and sawlog production will pick up again. No decrease in the level of pulp-wood production by APM Ltd., is envisaged currently and it is likely that production will increase when the new crop is ready, as the mill processes favour new wood growth.

From a more pessimistic point of view, unless there is a dramatic increase in pulp-wood production it is likely that the forestry industry in the Huon will continue its slow decline. The region relies solely on native forests and there is little likelihood that pine plantations will be established. Ecologically this is desirable but, as pine is predicted to play an increasingly important role in Tasmania sawlog production, the Huon may well be disadvantaged by a lack of pine forests. The other important factor, which must be taken into account is the likelihood that the present trend for the centralizing of processing in Hobart, will continue. Inevitably, this will mean

[36] Statistics supplied by the Geeveston District Office of the Forestry Commission.

[37] Australian Paper Manufacturers (APM Ltd.) commenced production of wood-pulp for packaging paper and board at Port Huon in November, 1962. A special licence issued in 1960, gave APM Ltd. exclusive rights to obtain pulp wood in the area for a period of 80 years.

the closure of some of the existing mills and a decline in the number of jobs available. Finally, the efforts of conservationists to prevent forestry in wilderness areas in the Huon must also be taken into account. To sum up, the future looks promising for the Huon's forests, but employment prospects in the forestry industry are not as favourable.

Fishing

The fishing industry in the Huon is concentrated in the area around Dover and on present indications seems the most likely prospect for increasing employment opportunity in the Esperance municipality.

Currently there are 47 registered fishing boats in the Huon, out of a State total of approximately 600. Additional information about professional fishermen in the area is scarce, partly because of confusion over the definition of port of landing and partly because fishermen are reluctant to provide information about their catch or its location.

Dover has two fish processing factories. The Victorian Canning Company currently has three to four permenent members of staff and about 11 casuals. The only processing carried out in the factory is freezing and there are no plans for expansion of activities. Any increase in supply is dealt with by employing extra casuals.

The Dover Fisheries, on the other hand, plan to expand their activities considerably by moving into the canning of fish as well as freezing it. The business is also interested in the currently unexploited potential of off-shore waters for deep-sea trawling and in the feasibility of making Dover the centre for supplying bait to the Japanese tuna fleet, which is a multi-million dollar industry. Twelve months ago, Dover Fisheries employed two permanent staff members and casuals; the number of

permanent staff members has now increased to 11 and it is anticipated by the company, that within the next six months, there will be 45 full-time staff members and about 50 casuals. If the company is able to implement its plans, it will give a great boost to employment opportunities in the Dover area.

Another potential area of development in the Huon fishing industry is that of fish culture. Two leases for oyster culture have already been let- one at Dover and the other at Cygnet. Both ventures are economically viable and there is undoubtedly room for expansion, although not unlimited expansion because of social pressures. Some general interest has also been shown in the feasibility of trout culture in the tributaries of the Huon. There have been no developments as yet, but the Fishing Development Authority anticipates that this will take place in two to five years.

Generally, the future of the fishing industry in the Huon seems a fairly promising one.

Summary of economic future of the Huon Valley

During the course of the study, information has been sought from both government and private sources (i.e. Directorate for Industrial Development, Department of Labour and Industry, Forestry Commission, Sea Fisheries, Department of Tourism, Chamber of Commerce and Chamber of Industry) on the economic future of the Huon. What is offered here is an overall impression of likely future development in the area.

The collapse of the apple and pear industry has slowed in that the remaining orchardists are better able to weather the hard times at present besetting the industry. Many of the uneconomic farm units have disappeared or are farmed by men who have other jobs. Alternative rural enterprise is limited and the surviving farms are employing

less labour and aiming for a high degree of efficiency of operation. It seems unlikely that farming will emerge as a major employer within the foreseeable future.

The forestry industry has expanded to some degree over the past decade although more recently there has been a rapid decline in the number of saw-mills in the region with a subsequent loss of jobs. This has been mainly due to a general cut in the level of saw-log production in Tasmania, to an increasing trend towards the centralizing of processing in Hobart and to a general decrease in the use of native hardwood timbers from the Huon.

At present it appears that the forestry industry in the Huon is limited in terms of growth potential and consequent employment opportunity. There are various reasons for this (i) the trend towards the centralizing of processing in the Huon seems likely to continue, (ii) it is anticipated that radiata pine will play an increasingly important role in future Tasmanian forestry production, but there are presently no plans for pine production in the Huon, (iii) the major timber areas in the south of the Huon are limited by the boundaries of the Hartz and South-West National Parks and (iv) saw-log production will not increase before the new crop of trees is ready for harvesting in 1990.

There are some developments which may assist the Huon's economic future. The most important of these is the Dover fishing industry which has strong potential for expansion and should create considerable job opportunity. Tourism in the Huon also has great potential, although it seems unlikely that it will create many new jobs, except possibly in the area of cottage industries producing goods from local materials for the tourist trade. In the agricultural area, there has been the establishment of the vineyard at Cygnet and the diversification by those farmers with the capital and suitable land to make it possible.

When one considers these facts in combination with the demographic information given, it must inevitably be concluded that there is not likely to be any major industrial development in the Huon in the immediate future, except in the fishing industry. There seems little reason to expect new industry to locate there: freight is expensive, the development of Port Huon would require large capital investment and there are few available raw materials. Agriculturalists are at best existing on low profit margins whilst being confronted with increasingly uncertain markets.

It seems likely that the northern areas of the Valley will become a residential area of Hobart, a trend that will accelerate with the eventual completion of the Huon Highway. This theory is supported by activity in the area of large real estate companies which specialise in suburban development.

The southern section of the Valley will, in all probability, continue to lose population until a balance is arrived at with the employment capacity of local enterprise, both agricultural and industrial.

4.4 Unemployment

Unemployment is a serious problem in the Huon Valley and, as part of the survey, a special analysis was made of unemployment in November, 1976. At this time, seven Tasmanian local government areas had more than nine per cent of their labour force unemployed: the seven included all three Huon municipalities.[38] The rate of unemployment in the Huon was twice that in the State of Tasmania in

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[38] Commonwealth Employment Service. Statistics by Local Government Area - Tasmania: end-October, 1976

November, 1976 (see Table 4.5). Of those in the labour force one in every 10 was unemployed at that time. However, the most striking feature of unemployment in the Huon is the proportion of young people in the area who are unemployed.

Table 4.5

Unemployment in November 1976 for Australia, Tasmania and the Huon Valley. 39

(Unemployed persons as a percentage of the 1971 labour force)

Area	Aged 15-19	Aged 20 and over	Total
Australia	12.6%	3.1%	4.2%
Tasmania	18.4%	2.8%	4.8%
Huon Valley	34.9%	7.0%	12.4%

Later in this report figures on unemployment among school leavers from Huon schools are quoted for several recent years. It will be indicated that many of these young people leave the Huon to look for work or to continue their education. Unemployment rates among the total group of leavers from Huon schools are not exceptionally high. However, the position is different f or those who continue to live in the Huon after leaving school.

In November 1976 more than a third of persons aged 15 to 19 living in the Huon were out of work. This figure is profoundly disturbing and indicative not only of problems with local employment opportunities but also of the need for support structures to assist those young people who are unemployed. It should be noted that this is not just, or even primarily, a problem of unemployment

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[39] Sources : Australia: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Labour Force Bulletin for November, 1976; Tasmania Australian Bureau of Statistics, Labour Force Survey, November 1976 (unpublished tabulation); Huon Valley; Commonwealth Employment Service statistics.

among school leavers. As shown later in this report the unemployment rate among those who had left school at the end of the previous year was less than that for the 15-19 age group as a whole.[40]

Looked at from a different perspective, more than a third of all the unemployed in the Huon Valley (36.5 per cent) are in the 15-19 age group and another 17 per cent are in the 20-24 age group. The average duration of unemployment of those in the 15-19 group was less than for most other groups in the Huon but was still 7.1 months.[41]

Finally, it would seem appropriate to draw attention to three other dimensions of the unemployment situation in the Huon. Rates of unemployment for men and women in the Huon are similar - except in the Esperance municipality. Here 15 per cent of women in the labour force are unemployed but only nine per cent of the men. This reflects the limited local employment opportunities for women that are mentioned later in this section of the report.[42] With respect to the distribution of unemployment in the area rates are considerably higher in Port Cygnet than elsewhere (14 per cent in November, 1976 compared with approximately 10 per cent in the other local government areas). This may reflect the limited range of employment available in Cygnet; in Esperance, for example, more unskilled jobs in the timber industry are available than in Cygnet. Finally, it should be emphasized that the usual occupation of the unemployed in the Huon is, in the great majority of cases, semi-skilled or unskilled jobs. As shown in Table 4.16 more than half of the unemployed usually work in unskilled jobs.

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[40] See page 116.

[41] Figures in this paragraph and the next are taken from a special analysis of registered unemployed in Huon municipalities from records of the Commonwealth Employment Office.

[42] See page 51.

Table 4.6

Usual Occupations of Registered Unemployed in Huon Valley, November, 1976. [43]

	Occupation category		Number	Percentage
1	Professional (upper and lower)		6	1.5%
2	Managerial and Self-Employed		0	-
3	Clerical (including office workers)		25	6.4%
4	Skilled manual		23	5.9%
5	Semi-skilled		115	29.3%
	Shop assistants	35		
	Factory hands	40		
	Truck drivers	13		
	Sawmill workers	21		
6	Unskilled		223	56.9%
	Labourers	1[illegible]		
	Farm hands	36		
	TOTAL		392	100%

4.5 EMPLOYMENT

Introduction

The information in this section is derived mainly from a survey of the occupations followed by the parents of Huon Valley school children, carried out late in 1976. General demographic trends since 1971 have already been outlined in this report. More particularly, employment patterns in the Huon have been changed by the in-migration of people with upper status jobs into the northern part of the Valley, by the stabilising of population in the Port Cygnet and Huon municipalities and by the continued population loss from the Esperance municipality. An examina-

[43] Source, C.E.S. records

tion of the nature and implications of these changes was seen as being important for a full understanding of the Huon. More specifically, current information about parents' occupations was seen as providing a useful indication of local job opportunities. The employment found by school leavers is examined later in the report but, since many young workers frequently change jobs, it was felt that the parents' occupations would provide a more complete picture of the type of work available within the Huon.

Methodology

Questionnaires were sent to all non-government and government schools in the region, to be completed by the eldest child in each family still at school.[44] The questionnaires were designed to provide information about the occupation and labour force status of both parents, about job location and the place of residence. A further point of interest was how much farming was still being carried out in the Valley and various questions were asked about whether farming fathers had another job and whether mothers were employed in seasonal work. Unfortunately, it was very difficult to separate the week-end or "hobby" farmers, many of whom are probably not long-standing residents of the area, from the "real" farmers who may have been forced to take another job to supplement their farm income. To some extent this ruled out the possibility of determining the effects of the rural recession in the Huon, but the questionnaires yielded some useful information about the number of farmers in comparison with other occupational groups in the region, the location of the farms that remain and the type of alternative work in which farmers are engaging.

A total of 1,019 questionnaires was returned. Each school in the Huon provided an estimate of the number

[44] See Appendix 2 for a copy of the questionnaire.

of families in the school, which produced a total figure of 1,500. On this basis, the 1,019 questionnaires represent 68 per cent of the total number of families. However, 1500 is obviously an over-estimate because no allowance is made for families with children at more than one school in the Huon. A more realistic estimate would seem to be that the survey represents responses from at least 75 per cent of the families of Huon students.

The responses were coded and processed by computer. Initially, a 16-point scale was used to code the parents' occupations (as in Table 4.7) but this was later collapsed to a 9-point scale (as in Table 4.8) and a 4-point scale (as in Table 4.11). Details of the scales used are provided in Appendix 3.

One of the main problems in the analysis was the lack of current, comparative information about the occupational characteristics of the general population and in this respect it was necessary to use data based mainly on the 1966 Census. Nevertheless, this provides a useful comparison for the Huon survey. Current information about the labour force in Australia was obtained from bulletins issued by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Occupational Structure

The occupations and labour force status of the fathers of Huon Valley students are shown in Table 4.7. No comment is made in this section on the number of fathers who are unemployed, as the large-scale problem of unemployment in the Huon is discussed more fully in other sections of the report.

A comparison with the Australian male work-force indicates a different distribution of occupational groups in the Huon (see Table 4.8). Obviously, in a rural area such as the Huon there is an above average number of farmers, but there are also relatively few fathers with clerical or skilled jobs and a disproportionately large

Table 4.7

Fathers' occupations

Occupational group	No.	%
1. Upper professional	20	2.0
2. Graziers	-	-
3. Lower professional	26	2.6
4. Managerial	43	4.2
5. Self-employed (shop proprietors)	21	2.0
6. Farmers	176	17.3
7.. Clerical and related workers	29	2.8
8. Armed Services and Police Force	7	.7
9. Craftsmen and foremen	93	9.0
10. Shop Assistants	5	.5
11. Operatives and process workers	172	16.9
12. Drivers	105	10.3
13. Personal, domestic and other service workers	28	2.8
14. Miners	1	.1
15. Farm and rural workers	137	13.4
16. Labourers	41	4.0
17. Unemployed	61	6.0
18. Pensioners	24	2.4
19. Deceased, separated/divorced	30	3.0
TOTAL	1,019	100.0%

number with semi-skilled and unskilled, manual jobs. A more detailed study of the Huon's occupational structure also revealed that the range of occupations represented within the broad divisions is distinctly limited in comparison with the Australian male work force.[45] This is to be expected in an area which has a limited number of industries and major employers, but it is important to draw attention to the fact that young people in the Huon are

[45]For the occupational range of the Australian male work force see Leonard Broom and F. Lancaster Jones, Opportunity and Attainment in Australia, (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1976), pp. 121-124.

likely to have direct experience of only a limited range of occupations.

Table 4.8

Occupational structure in the Huon Valley, rural Queensland and Australia (males only)

Occupational Group	Huon Valley %	Australia %	Q'land %
Professional	5.1	8.0	2.4
Graziers	-	2.7	14.0
Managerial	7.1	8.7	8.7
Farmers	19.5	4.4	.9
Clerical	4.0	13.7	7.7
Skilled	10.3	21.3	18.8
Semi-skilled	31.1	20.9	22.2
Unskilled	7.7	16.5	11.1
Farm and rural workers	15.2	3.9	14.0
TOTAL	100% (N-904)	100% (N-3,422,000)	100% (N-213)

Note : The figures for Australia are taken from Opportunity and Attainment in Australia, p.36 (see footnote 45 above). For Queensland, see Prospects for School-leavers, p.72 (see footnote 46 below).

The skilled workers among the Huon fathers are predominantly carpenters, electricians, motor mechanics and machinery-installation and maintenance workers. Several of the trades, including important ones such as plumbing, are clearly under-represented or not represented at all. The semi-skilled labour force is similarly a typical in its composition and reflects the importance of the Huon's forestry industry. Almost half of the fathers with semi-skilled jobs are employed in the forestry industry in Esperance Municipality, predominantly as timber workers, but also as plant operators and employees of the Australian Paper Mills (A.P.M. Ltd.) at Port Huon. Bus drivers, cartage contractors and delivery drivers are also important in this occupational group in the Huon,

whereas there are relatively few factory workers (other than those at A.P.M. Ltd.) and shop assistants. The few factories located in the Huon process fruit or fish and are heavily dependent on seasonal and temporary labour, which is not a very suitable proposition for household heads.

The distribution of Huon fathers with unskilled jobs tends to be more typical of the general male work force, although it seems likely that the number employed by the Public Works Department in road works and construction is unusually large. Interestingly, the percentage of fathers in the high status, professional and managerial jobs in the Huon is comparable with the national average and the "upper professionals" form a fairly representative group of doctors, lawyers, accountants etc. The "lower professionals" however, are limited in their occupational range, with 16 of the 26 fathers employed as school-teachers. Fathers with managerial jobs are under-represented in the Huon and tend to be mainly bank managers, publicans and service-station proprietors. Self-employed shop-proprietors are over-represented, reflecting the predominance of small, owner-operated shops in the region.

It is not clear if the Huon is typical of other country areas, since general information on the occupational structure of rural areas was not available for comparison. A study of four rural towns in Queensland[46] confirms an under-representation of semi-skilled workers among the Huon fathers. (see Table 4.8). It seems very likely however, that the contrast between the Huon and Queensland studies can be attributed to the difference between the type of jobs available in rural towns and those available in a rural region. At the same time, it should be remembered that 39 per cent of the Huon's population is concentrated

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[46] B. McGaw et al. "Prospects for School-leavers", in School Leavers : Choice and Opportunity, commissioned by the Australian Government Commission of Inquiry into Poverty (Canberra: A.G.P.S., 1977).

in four service centres. Normally, one might expect to find job offerings above the semi-skilled level in these centres and it seems possible that the collapse of the highly specialized apple and pear industry in the Huon has had an effect more profound than the general effects of rural recession in Australia. Many small businesses whose only purpose was to service the fruit industry have probably disappeared altogether, leaving their former owners or employees little alternative to emigration or entry to a lower occupational level.

Geographical Distribution

In general terms, the Valley seems unable to absorb its total work-force, although a complete picture cannot be drawn here since figures on the number of people travelling from homes outside the Huon to work in the Valley are not available. Similarly, the number of skilled people taking unskilled jobs in order to remain in the Valley cannot be determined.

Among the fathers of the Huon students, some occupational groups seem more likely than others to be forced to find work out of the Valley. (see Table 4.9) These are predominantly the fathers with professional, clerical and skilled jobs, although a large number of fathers with unskilled jobs also work in Hobart. Fathers with managerial jobs tend to be able to find work in most parts of the Valley, although many of them work in Huonville, which is the region's main service centre. Many of the fathers with professional or skilled jobs also work in Huonville, while a disproportionately large number of the fathers with semi-skilled or unskilled, manual jobs work in the southern municipality of Esperance.

Table 4.10 shows the occupations of Huon fathers according to their place of residence and reflects the findings of Table 4.9. Most of the fathers with upper status and skilled and unskilled jobs live in the northern

Table 4.9

Fathers' occupations by job location (row percentages)

Occupational group	Job Location				
	Huon Munic	Pt Cygnet Munic	Esper. Munic.	Out of Valley (incl. Hbt.)	Total (100%)
Professional	35	7	23	35	(N-46)
Graziers	-	-	-	-	-
Managerial	41	24	24	11	(N-63)
Farmers	54	23	23	-	(N-176)
Clerical	28	3	25	44	(N-36)
Skilled	36	8	20	36	(N-95)
Semi-skilled	26	9	41	24	(N-280)
Unskilled	29	10	21	40	(N-70)
Farm & rural workers	29	8	58	5	(N-137)

part of the Valley, where they are likely to be working and where they are within commuting distance of Hobart if necessary. On the other hand, many of the fathers with semi-skilled or labouring jobs live in Esperance, where they are very likely employed in the forestry industry or, to a much lesser extent, in the fishing industry. As the future of the forestry industry in the Huon is rather uncertain, it seems possible that a number of the fathers living in Esperance may be forced to seek other jobs in the near future. Hobart is not within easy commuting distance of the southernmost part of the Valley, so the population of Esperance is likely to continue its slow decline.

The main significance of Table 4.10 lies in its indication of a socio-economic difference between families living in the two northern municipalities and those living in Esperance. Since many studies provide evidence of the relationship between educational attainment and socio-economic status, it seems reasonable to assume that many

of the students at Geeveston and Dover District schools can be considered "at risk".

Table 4.10

Fathers' occupations by place of residence

Occupational group	Place of residence (Municipalities)			
	Huon	Pt Cygnet	Esperance	Total
Professional	28	6	12	46
Graziers	-	-	-	-
Managerial	31	16	16	63
Farmers	96	40	40	176
Clerical	20	5	11	36
Skilled	52	22	20	94
Semi-skilled	124	38	114	276
Unskilled	35	17	18	70
Farm & rural workers	51	15	70	136
Not in labour force	57	28	30	115
Total	494	187	331	1012

Note : Seven fathers who live out of the Valley have not been included.

Farming

As the Huon is a rural area, it was considered valuable to examine farmers separately and this heading relates to the families involved in farming in the Valley. Three categories of farmers were identified :- (a) full-time farmers with no other occupation; (b) those whose main occupation is farming, but who supplement this income with other employment and (c) those with full-time jobs whose farming is relegated (through choice or necessity) to evenings and/or weekends. There are 299 farm-owning fathers among the parents surveyed, 176 of whom are full-time or first occupation farmers. Twenty of the fathers in this latter category have part-time jobs, which are almost exclusively at or below the semi-skilled level.

The occupations of the remaining farm-owning fathers cover a fairly wide range and fail to indicate whether the father was formerly a full-time farmer forced to seek additional income or a full-time employee now living on a "hobby" farm. As most farming in the Huon is fairly specialised the assumption can reasonably be made that former farmers would only be able to seek semi- or unskilled work, whereas most "hobby" farmers would need a white collar or skilled level of income to purchase and maintain a farm. On this basis, about two-thirds of the part-time farmers in the Huon would very likely be full-time farmers if their farms still provided a supportable level of income (Table 4.11). In the present economic climate it seems unlikely that any of these farms will offer a livelihood for today's Huon students.

Table 4.11
Occupations of part-time farmers

Occupational group	N	%	
White collar	29	23.4)	36.3%
Skilled	16	12.9)	
Semi-skilled	58	46.9)	63.7%
Unskilled	21	16.9)	
	124	100.0%	

Using the same basis for definition, a closer look at home addresses shows that the "hobby" farmers are almost exclusively the property of the northern section of the Valley. The far southern region is not only poorly represented in this respect but also in terms of full-time farmers. As Table 4.12 shows, the northern municipalities account for 78 per cent of the full-time farmers, although only 66 per cent of the total number of families in the survey live there. This situation results in a very limited agricultural background for children at Dover District School particularly, in comparison with other schools in the Valley. Not unexpectedly, most of the

fathers employed as farm labourers also work in the northern part of the Valley. Of the 34 rural workers in the Dover area, only three work on farms. Almost all of the rural workers in Esperance are employed as bush workers, or to a lesser extent, as fishermen. Rather interestingly, the number of fathers in this occupational group (see Table 4.7) who are employed in forestry or fishing is the same as the number who work on farms. This compares with the Australian distribution for 1966 of four farm workers (not including grazing, or dairy farms) for every one forestry worker and fisherman.[47] Forestry has always been an important industry in the Huon, but the comparison undoubtedly confirms a decrease in the number of farm jobs available in the Huon in the past 10 years or so.

Table 4.12

Home address of farm-owning fathers

	Full-time		Part-time		Total farmers	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Huon Municipality	96	55.2	78	62.9	174	58.4
Cygnet Municipality	39	22.4	24	19.4	63	21.1
Geeveston area	31	17.8	15	12.1	46	15.4
Dover area	8	4.6	7	5.6	15	5.1
Totals *	174	100.0	124	100.0	298	100.0

* One out-of-valley farmer not included.

Employment of Mothers

About one-third of the mothers of Huon Valley students have some form of employment outside the home.

Generally speaking, the distribution of mothers' occupations approximates that of the Huon fathers, but there is a relative shortage of mothers employed in skilled

[47] Opportunity and Attainment in Australia, p.124

occupations (Table 4.13). This suggests of course, a lack of jobs for typists, bank clerks and shop assistants in the Huon. However, it is also likely that some mothers are working in family businesses or shops. The latter theory is consistent with finding an over-representation of self-employed shop-keepers and an under-representation of shop assistants among fathers.

A considerable number of the working mothers were found to have seasonal jobs on orchards or as factory hands and when this group was excluded, the general level of Huon mothers' participation in the labour force seemed very low. The Australian Bureau of Statistics estimates that 48 per cent of Australian wives in the 25-45 age group have jobs,[48] whereas the proportion of Huon mothers working in non-seasonal jobs is only 24 per cent.

Table 4.13
Mothers' occupations *

Occupational group	%
White collar	34
Skilled	1
Semi-skilled	36
Unskilled	29
Total	100% (N-349)

* Note : The table shows mothers with seasonal jobs and those with non-seasonal jobs. The number of mothers with seasonal jobs is 110.

One explanation for the low level of participation in the labour force is the poor availability and lack of suitable jobs for women in the Huon. This is supported by the fact that the percentage of working wives is lowest in the southern-most part of the Valley around Dover, where

[48] Australian Bureau of Statistics, The Labour Force, November 1976 (Reference No. 6.20), p.10.

local employment opportunity is dominated by the forestry and fishing industries. (See Table 4.14). Obviously, the idea that many women may not be interested in joining the labour force cannot be discounted and family responsibilities undoubtedly account for the fact that relatively few (10 per cent) of the wives work in Hobart.

Table 4.14
Geographical distribution of working mothers

Place of residence	%
Huon Municipality	40
Port Cygnet Municipality	35
Geeveston District	37
Dover District	28
TOTAL	100% (N-349)

An interesting factor to emerge from the survey of occupations is the strong association between fathers' and mothers' occupations (see Table 4.15). It was also found that there are very few seasonal workers among the working wives of men in the upper status occupations, whereas many of the wives whose husbands are in unskilled jobs, have seasonal jobs.

Table 4.15
Mothers' occupations by fathers' occupations

(row percentages)

Fathers' occupational group	Mothers' occupational group				
	White Collar %	Skilled %	Semi-skilled %	Unskilled %	Total 100%
White collar	48	1	25	26	(N-147)
Skilled	33	-	39	28	(N-36)
Semi-skilled	26	1	44	29	(N-96)
Unskilled	17	-	47	36	(N-70)

Fathers with white collar jobs are also more likely to have working wives than are fathers in semi- or unskilled jobs (see Table 4.16). This supports the notion that there is a lack of suitable jobs for women in the Huon, particularly in Esperance. It also appears as if the wives of men in white collar occupations either have greater opportunities to work in a family concern (e.g. shop or farm) and/or have higher educational qualifications, which enable them to re-enter the work force more easily. Overall, the pattern would appear to result in considerable financial contrast in the Valley between families with two fairly high incomes (these families are often also land-owners) and families with a single, relatively small income.

Table 4.16

Fathers' occupations by whether mother works

(row percentages)

Fathers' occupational group	Whether wife works		
	Yes %	No %	Total 100%
White collar	46	54	(N-322)
Skilled	39	61	(N-93)
Semi-skilled	34	66	(N-282)
Unskilled	34	66	(N-207)
Total	39	61	(904)

Summary

The major findings related to the survey of parental occupations in the Huon Valley are as follows :

1. The occupational structure of the fathers of Huon Valley students differs proportionately from that of the Australian male work force, with more farmers, fewer clerical and skilled workers and many more semi-skilled workers and manual labourers.

2. The occupational range of Huon fathers was found to be limited in comparison with the male work force in Australia generally.

3. The Valley is apparently unable to absorb its total male workforce and about one in five fathers travels out of the Valley, mainly to Hobart, to work. Many of these fathers have professional, clerical or skilled jobs, but a large number of unskilled workers also travel out of the Valley.

4. Within the Valley, Huonville supports the highest percentage of the work-force and the southern section of the Valley has a disproportionately large number of semi-skilled and manual workers.

5. In approximately two-thirds of the farming families surveyed, the father is a full-time farmer. Among the remaining farm-owners, it seems likely that about two in three would have been a full-time farmer at some previous stage.

6. Farmers and farm labourers are very poorly represented in the southern most part of the Valley.

7. The participation of Huon mothers in the labour force seems low in comparison with national figures.

8. There is a strong association between fathers' and mothers' occupations and the incidence of working mothers is highest in families where the father has a white collar job.

9. The northern part of the Valley has a higher proportion of upper status, two income families than the southern section.

Conclusions

The results of the survey of parental occupations have been interpreted mainly in light of their importance for the schools and school-leavers in the Huon region. Possibly the most important outcome of the survey of parents is that it confirms the results of the Huon school-leaver study, which indicated restricted employment opportunity and exposure to only a limited range of occupations for young people in the Huon. The predominance of lower level occupations and the limited occupational range found among fathers, the number of fathers who travel out of the Valley to work and the apparent low level of participation by women in the labour force all point clearly to the fact that work within the Valley is limited, both in scope and availability.

At present it seems unlikely that the job situation within the Valley will improve perceptibly in the near future. There may be an increase in the number of skilled and semi-skilled jobs available in the northern part, but this will be dependent on continued and fairly rapid population growth. In Esperance it seems likely that there will be a decline in the number of jobs available in future. This will be a consequence of the predicted slow decline of the forestry industry, although the potential growth of the Dover fishing industry may offset the decline to some extent. For future Huon school leavers however, the most likely alternatives will be entry to a low level occupation, finding work out of the Valley, or becoming unemployed.

The young people most vulnerable to the likelihood of unemployment are school leavers living in the Dover area. As already mentioned, it seems that the number of jobs in the area may decline and as Hobart is not within easy commuting distance, many young people may be forced to leave the area to find work. If the trend continues, enrolments in the two southern District schools will ultimately decline, with Dover likely to be the most affected.

Girls in the Huon face similarly restricted employment opportunities. The relatively small group of Huon mothers with non-seasonal jobs may well reflect traditional country attitudes towards women working, or it may be that in some cases mothers are required to help in family businesses, such as farms or shops. It also seems very likely however, that there is a shortage in the Huon of jobs which are available to women, such as shop assistants, bank clerks and typists. Most of the semi- and unskilled jobs available in the Huon are associated with rural activities geared towards males, while many of those which are available for women, such as working in the factories, are only temporary. For the majority of girls leaving school in Year 9 or 10, there is little option to finding work out of the Valley.

One final conclusion to be drawn from the survey of parental occupations relates to the evidence of an economic imbalance between the northern and southern parts of the Valley. Students living in the south are much more likely to come from single and low-income families than are children living in the north. There is enough evidence showing the relationship between socio-economic factors and educational development to make reiteration pointless. Specifically, however, the survey does seem to indicate that a sizeable number of students in the Huon have an economically-restricted and occupationally-limited family background. In this respect, Dover District School appears to be the most vulnerable.

5. EDUCATIONAL PROVISION IN THE HUON VALLEY

Research into the educational disadvantages associated with living in rural areas has, to date, been largely concerned with the identification and definition of the problem. Much less is known about the underlying reasons for the apparent inequalities in outcomes between urban and rural children. Various hypotheses have been put forward,[1] but the majority are unsupported by adequate research evidence.

One of the most common theories relating to rural disadvantage is that, "... country students often suffer disadvantage directly due to the lower levels of educational service offered in many areas."[2] This hypothesis provides the focal point of the following discussion and educational provision in the Huon is examined with a view to assessing the level of educational service provision in the area.

The discussion falls into two main sections. The first is a general description of education facilities in the Huon and looks at the schools themselves, enrolment trends, bussing and opportunities for post-secondary education in the area.

The second section is a comparative analysis of the provision of school staff and the level of material and financial resources in Huon schools. This examines not only whether schools in the region are discriminated against in the provision of these educational resources but, at a more general level, indicates the likelihood of an association between the provision of educational services in the region and educational outcomes.

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[1] See p. 142.

[2] Australia. Schools Commission, Report: rolling triennium 1977-79 (Canberra: Schools Commission, 1976), p.65.

The information in the section is taken primarily from official records in the Tasmanian Education Department and from information provided by the Catholic Education Office in Hobart. Except where specifically stated, figures are for the calendar year, 1977.

5.1 General description of educational provision

The schools

The Huon Valley, with a population of approximately 10,000, contains the full range of types of school in Tasmania except for secondary colleges, catering for Year 11 and 12 schooling. There are nine government schools in the region, with a total enrolment in August 1977 of 1973 students. Four of these schools are primary schools. The largest is located in Huonville and has an enrolment of 537 pupils. Smaller primary schools are at Franklin (103 pupils), Glen Huon (47) and Judbury (25). As well, a small special school is located in Huonville-Ranelagh.

District schools, providing education from kindergarten to Year 10, are located in Cygnet (190 students), Geeveston (301) and Dover (165). These schools and the Huonville Primary Schools include kindergarten classes which, in the normal State pattern, are fully integrated into primary education. Secondary education to Year 10 is dominated by the high school in Huonville, enrolling 594 students or 86 per cent of the secondary students attending government schools in the Huon.

There are two Catholic schools in the Huon Valley. St. James College at Cygnet (261 students) is similar to district schools in that it enrols students for both primary and secondary education. Sacred Heart school at Geeveston (112 students) is a primary school, though in the past it enrolled some secondary students. Finally, a small primary school (11 students) is run by the Seventh Day Adventist Church and located at Glen Huon.

As in most country areas with an extended history of settlement, schools in the Huon Valley tend to be long established. The present primary schools were all established more than sixty years ago while the district schools grew out of primary schools established before the turn of the century. Until the late 1930's the pattern of government-school provision was of primary schools, mostly small one- or two-teacher schools. Extended secondary education was only available through entry to selective high schools in Hobart and involved children living away from home. In 1900 the valley had no fewer than 30 primary schools and in 1925,33, indicating the decentralized nature of provision. This pattern was modified drastically by the introduction of district schools (originally known as area schools) in the late 1930's. In the associated consolidation, most of the small primary schools were closed and children from outlying centres bussed to district schools in the larger centres of Cygnet (area school in 1938), Geeveston (1938), Huonville (1940) and Dover (1955). By 1950 there were only 12 primary or district schools remaining in the Huon Valley. The most significant development since then has been the establishment of a separate comprehensive high school in Huonville in 1961. Formerly, children mostly stayed in their own district for both primary and secondary schooling: now most older students are bussed to the high school, the largest school in the area.

Enrolment trends

In accordance with overall population trends in the Huon Valley, school enrolments have declined since 1970. From 1970 to 1977 total enrolments in government schools fell by nine per cent and in Catholic schools by 19 per cent (largely because of the closure of the Catholic school at Franklin).

An examination of the different levels of schooling in the government system reveals some variations from the overall pattern (see Appendix 5, Tables 1-3). Kindergarten

enrolments have increased (from 111 to 147) because of the commencement of new classes at two of the district schools in 1974; otherwise kindergarten enrolments have been static. At primary level there has been a consistent decline in enrolments since 1975, averaging 2.5 per cent annually. At secondary level there has been a substantial decline in district school enrolments (totalling a 29.5 per cent loss since 1970) and a small increase in enrolments at the high school. The consequence is that a higher proportion of secondary students now attend the high school: the proportion has increased from 81 per cent in 1970 to 86 per cent in 1977.

The changing nature of the Huon and inadequate information about migration flows make it difficult to predict future school enrolments. The most recent prediction of high school enrolments by the Research Branch of the Education Department is that, in the short term there will be a decline in enrolments at Huonville High.[3] However, the following table, showing the ages of children at school in the Huon, suggests that secondary enrolments will at least stabilize and probably increase from the early 1980's onwards.

Table 5.1

Ages of children at school in Huon Valley[4]

Age	Number of children in Huon Schools
4	64
5	172
6	209
7	212
8	217
9	222
10	214
11	187
12	194
13	174

(continued)

[3]Tasmania. Education Department. Research Branch, High and District Schools Secondary February Enrolment Predictions 1978-1981. Survey Report No. 72. Hobart, 1977.

[4]As at August 1977. Source: unpublished statistics from Education Department Annual School Census.

Table 5.1 (cont'd)

Age	Number of children in Huon Schools
14	211
15	191
16	81
17	8
18	1

Of course, some parents living in the Huon transport their children to Hobart schools each day. In 1976, 98 per cent of the Huon's primary-age children attended school in the Huon whereas 95 per cent of children 12-15 did so.[5] As a result the future increase in secondary enrolments will be slightly less than might appear from Table 5.1.

Over the next few years there is likely to be some re-distribution of secondary pupils within the Huon area. Arising from recommendations of an Education Department Committee, secondary classes at the Cygnet District School are to be phased out and pupils bussed to Huonville High.[6] The position could be further changed by a review of the future of secondary classes at the Geeveston District School in 1978: if the decision is to phase out these classes the effect of the Cygnet closure would be extended and, in the immediate future, minimize any decline in enrolment at Huonville High; if it were decided to increase the proportion of students staying at Geeveston, the high school would be more unlikely to grow beyond its present size. Secondary enrolments at St. James are likely to be at least maintained and probably increased: the planned developments in facilities and curriculum provision will encourage Catholic parents to leave their children at St. James rather than transfer them to Catholic schools in Hobart.

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[5]Sources: Annual School Census for August, 1976 and ABS, 1976 Census, "Unpublished Tabulations on Characteristics of Population (Preliminary) for Esperance, Huon and Port Cygnet Municipalities".

[6]The final report of the District Schools Committee which contains these decisions is to be published early in 1978.

Organization of schools.

Three aspects of school organization in the Huon are discussed under this heading: (i) district schools; (ii) school bussing; and (iii) opportunities for Higher School Certificate studies and post-secondary education.

District schools.

A characteristic feature of rural education in Tasmania has been the provision of district schools, offering schooling from kindergarten through to Year 10. At the end of primary education (Year 6) more than half of the students in each of the district schools in the valley transfer to Huonville High School for their secondary education (see Appendix 5, Table 4). The high school depends on these students to a considerable extent: it is estimated that approximately a third of the 637 students at the high school in 1976 could more conveniently have attended one of the district schools.[7] This practice means that secondary enrolments in each of the three district schools are very small: in 1976 the average secondary enrolment was 35 and the average size of Year 10 classes was six or "below the optimum size for stimulating group discussion and interaction."[8]

Several factors account for the small proportion of district school students remaining in district schools for their secondary education. Unlike other country areas in Tasmania, where distance may prevent students from attending a high school, the majority of students in the Huon Valley are able to travel to the high school at Huonville. The school bus system covers most of the Valley, including areas as remote as Southport and Ida Bay.

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[7]This estimate was based on the number of children from district school areas who travel to the high school by bus.

[8]J.A. Fyfield, "Rural-Metropolitan Aspects", in Rights & Inequality in Education, ed. Peter J. Fensham (Melbourne: Cheshire Publishing, 1970), p. 95.

Secondly, the district schools in the Huon, unlike many others in the State, do not have any feeder primary schools which would supplement their Year 7 enrolment. All four primary schools in the Huon (Judbury, Glen Huon, Franklin and Huonville) are closer to the high school than to any of the district schools.

A third factor, which is examined more closely in the section on school leavers, is that some parents obviously prefer to send their children to the high school rather than to a district school. The results of the school leaver survey carried out as part of this study show that among school leavers from Huonville High, 78 per cent of those who came from district school areas were doing mainly Levels 1 and 11 subjects. From this it might be inferred that factors other than the availability of a full range of Levels in the district schools influenced the decision of these students to attend the high school.

Teachers in the Huon schools are generally agreed that the main effect of the structural barrier at the end of Year 6 is to separate the more academically able students from the less able. In the words of one Principal, "we tend to lose almost all Level 3 students, many Level 2 and very few of the problem groups - remedials, slow learners and disruptives."[9] Again, this view is supported by the results of our survey of school leavers, which show that district school leavers in the Huon generally have a lower level of educational attainment than leavers from Huonville High.

The value position adopted in this report is that a process of separating students into two types of school for secondary education is undesirable. Country students

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[9]Comment made by the Principal of a district school in the Huon for the Survey of Secondary Education. See Committee on Secondary Education, Secondary Education in Tasmania, (Hobart: Education Department of Tasmania, 1977).

have to experience a structural decision-point in their school that is not required of city children in Tasmania. As suggested in a Tasmanian longitudinal study carried out for the Poverty Inquiry, the process leads to "the restriction of the life-chances of many country children."[10]

School Bussing

One of the acknowledged disadvantages of country education is the amount of travelling that may be required. For many students, travelling to school by bus is unavoidable, but as mentioned earlier in some cases the choice is voluntary and numbers of students by-pass a more convenient district school to travel to the high school in Huonville. More than two-thirds of the children at school in the Huon are bussed to school and those coming to the high school from the southern-most parts of the Valley spend up to three hours in daily travel. The maps on pages 65 - 67 show the feeder areas and school bus routes for the larger schools in the Huon.

Travelling to school by bus has definite drawbacks. One of the most common criticisms of the bus service in the Huon is that some of the buses are old and draughty. Roads are often poor, making reading difficult. Perhaps more important, is the fact that extra-school activities may be severely restricted by the limitations of a school bus time-table.

Opportunities for Education Beyond Year 10

A major disadvantage inherent in the organization of schools in the Huon is that students requiring education beyond Year 10, whether academically or vocationally oriented, are obliged to travel to Hobart. Students doing

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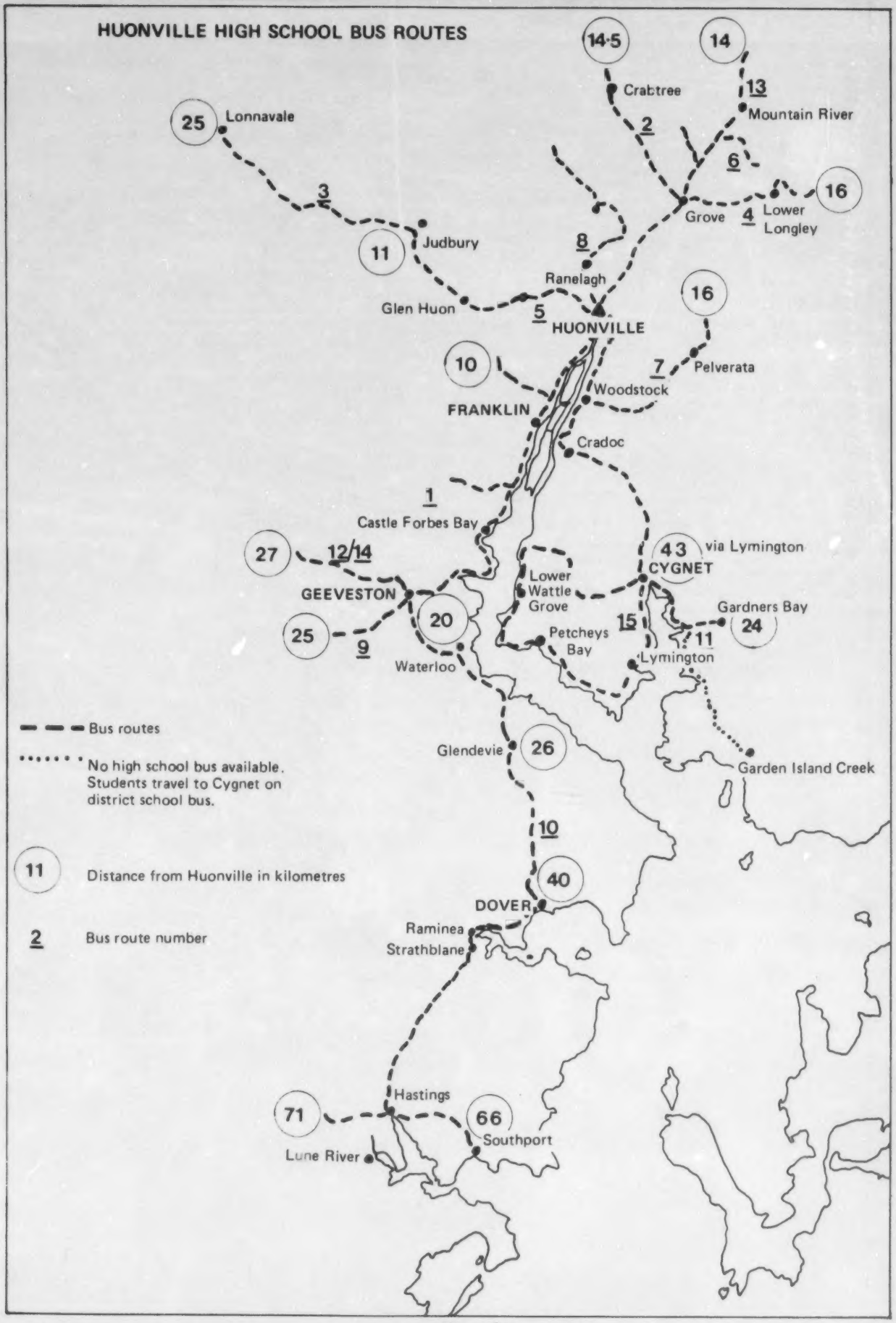
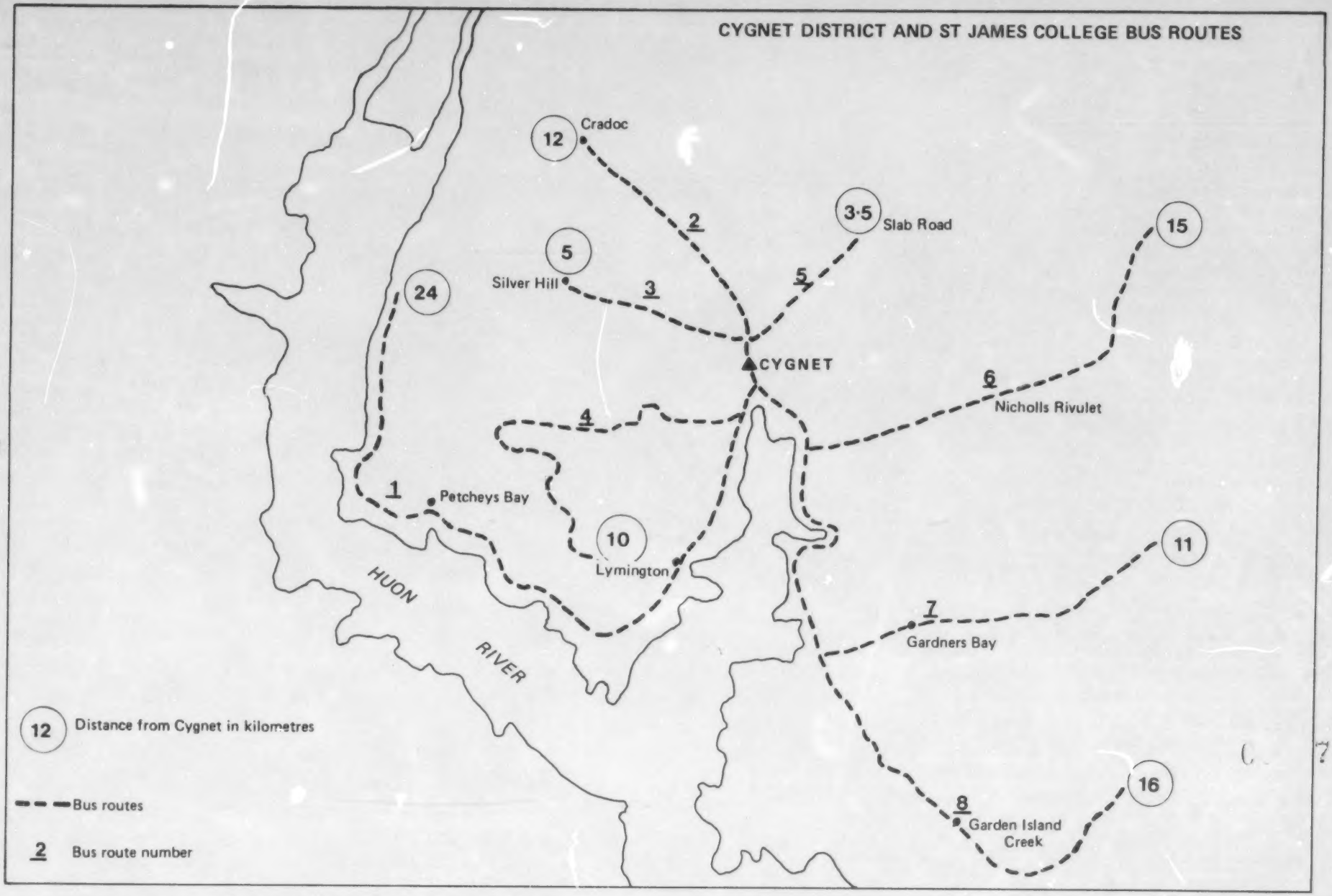
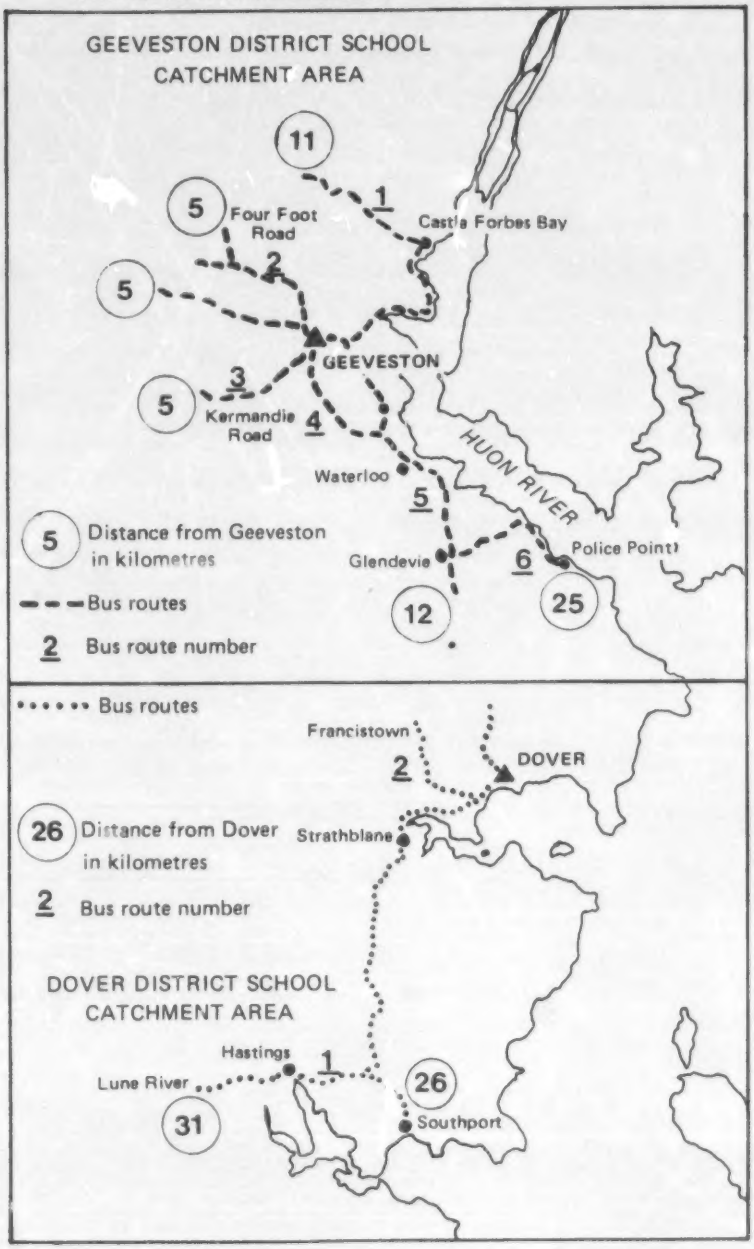
[10] Neville Behrens, Schooling and Work (Hobart: Education Department of Tasmania, 1975), p.33


HUONVILLE HIGH SCHOOL BUS ROUTES
14·5
14
Crabtree
13
Mountain River
25
Lonnavale
2
6
16
3
Grove
4
Lower Longley
11
Judbury
8
Ranelagh
Glen Huon
5
HUONVILLE
16
10
7
Pelverata
Woodstock
FRANKLIN
Cradoc
1
Castle Forbes Bay
27
12/14
43
via Lymington
CYGNET
Lower Wattle Grove
GEEVESTON
Gardners Bay
20
24
25
15
Petcheys Bay
9
11
Waterloo
Lymington
Bus routes
Glendevie
26
Garden Island Creek
No high school bus available. Students travel to Cygnet on district school bus.
10
11
Distance from Huonville in kilometres
40
DOVER
2
Bus route number
Raminea
Strathblane
Hastings
71
66
Southport
Lune River


CYGNET DISTRICT AND ST JAMES COLLEGE BUS ROUTES
Cradoc
12
2
3·5
Slab Road
15
5
Silver Hill
3
5
24
CYGNET
6
Nicholls Rivulet
4
1
Petcheys Bay
10
Lymington
11
HUON
RIVER
7
Gardners Bay
16
8
Garden Island Creek
12 Distance from Cygnet in kilometres
Bus routes
2 Bus route number

GEEVESTON & DOVER DISTRICT SCHOOL BUS ROUTES
(Includes Sacred Heart Students.)



Higher School Certificate (H.S.C.) studies are able to travel to Hobart daily on the free bus provided by the Education Department. The journey is a lengthy one however, as the bus leaves South Franklin at 7.30 and returns at 5.30 and numbers of students prefer to board in Hobart. In 1977 there were approximately 48 Huon Valley students at Secondary Colleges in Hobart, 21 of whom travel to Hobart daily.[11] For any student living in the southern part of the Valley, the problem of travel is more acute as there is no H.S.C. bus for this area.

Students doing apprenticeship courses face similar difficulties. For some technical courses, students are required to spend a full day once a week at the technical college. Fare concessions for non-school students on the privately-operated bus lines which service the Huon have been discontinued, so that for some students travelling to and from Hobart the process is not only a lengthy one, but an expensive one. To take the most extreme example, the return fare from Dover to Hobart is $8.00.

Other technical courses operate a "block" system of college studies, and apprentices are required to spend a full fortnight once a term in course work at the college. This again presents problems of travel or accommodation for apprentices in the Huon Valley.

At present, there is little likelihood that fully accredited apprenticeship courses will be offered in the Huon. Reasons for this are primarily practical ones, due to the problem of providing adequate facilities and workshop accommodation in the area.

However, a number of service courses run by the technical college in Hobart are now offered in the Huon, using the high school in Huonville as a base. The courses

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[11] This figure is based on the follow up of the 1975 and 1976 school leavers undertaken as part of the present study.

are seen as providing a valuable service to residents of the Huon, although they do little to extend opportunity for vocational training in the region.

With regard to technical education in the area, reference can be made here to technical courses offered by schools in the Huon area. All secondary schools in the area offer some experience of technical education for both boys and girls, either Technical Drawing, Woodwork and Metal Work or Home Arts and Crafts. Geeveston and Dover District Schools also offer courses in Rural Science, which were introduced at the beginning of 1977. Geeveston District School, which has a 21 acre farm attached to it, offers Rural Science courses to all secondary boys. A similar course is offered at the Dover District School to all secondary students for four periods a week. In 1978 it is hoped to extend the course to cover the upper primary sections, and eventually the whole school. Neither the high school at Huonville nor Cygnet District School offer courses in rural or agricultural science.

5.2 School Personnel

The intention in this report has been to compare the staffing of Huon schools with that in the remainder of Tasmania and with national levels. In view of the lack of information at both State and national levels it became necessary to concentrate on selected regions within Tasmania and to compare the Huon with these. The comparative analysis was not possible on the basis of published information but through data collected by educational systems for individual schools. Information about school personnel mostly refers to the situation in 1976 but in some cases it was necessary to use 1975 data. The survey, then, is of staff characteristics at a given point of time. Statistical tests of differences between regions have been carried out where appropriate.(these tests were either the chi-square or the student t test.)

Characteristics of selected regions

Four Tasmanian geographical regions were selected for analysis: the Huon Valley, the Eastern Shore, the Derwent Valley and the West Tamar.

In selecting regions for comparison with the Huon Valley considerable attention has been paid to the degree of urbanization in the selected areas. Each of the regions contains both city and country areas but, as indicated in the table below, the proportion of the population living in larger centres of population varies. The Huon, as indicated previously in this report, is essentially rural in character, with only one centre containing more than 1000 residents. Two of the remaining regions contain a balance between urban and rural populations. The Derwent Valley, located north-west of Hobart, has about half of its population living in the town of New Norfolk with most of the remainder living further away from Hobart in small rural communities. In the West Tamar region about half of the population is within the Launceston urban area with the remainder in small centres spread along the Tamar estuary. Like the Huon this area is becoming part of the commuter-zone of a larger urban centre while orcharding has also been of significance in this region. Finally, the Eastern Shore region is largely urban in population, with three-quarters of the people living in the suburbs of Hobart located "over the bridge". The rest are thinly spread over a large part of south-eastern Tasmania. The regions represent a considerable range of different situations and provide a basis for making comparisons between the Huon and other Tasmanian regions with respect to educational services and outcomes.

A further consideration in the selection of the regions was the existence in each of the different types of school found in the State.[12] This was possible with

[12] For details of the government schools in each region, see Appendix 4.

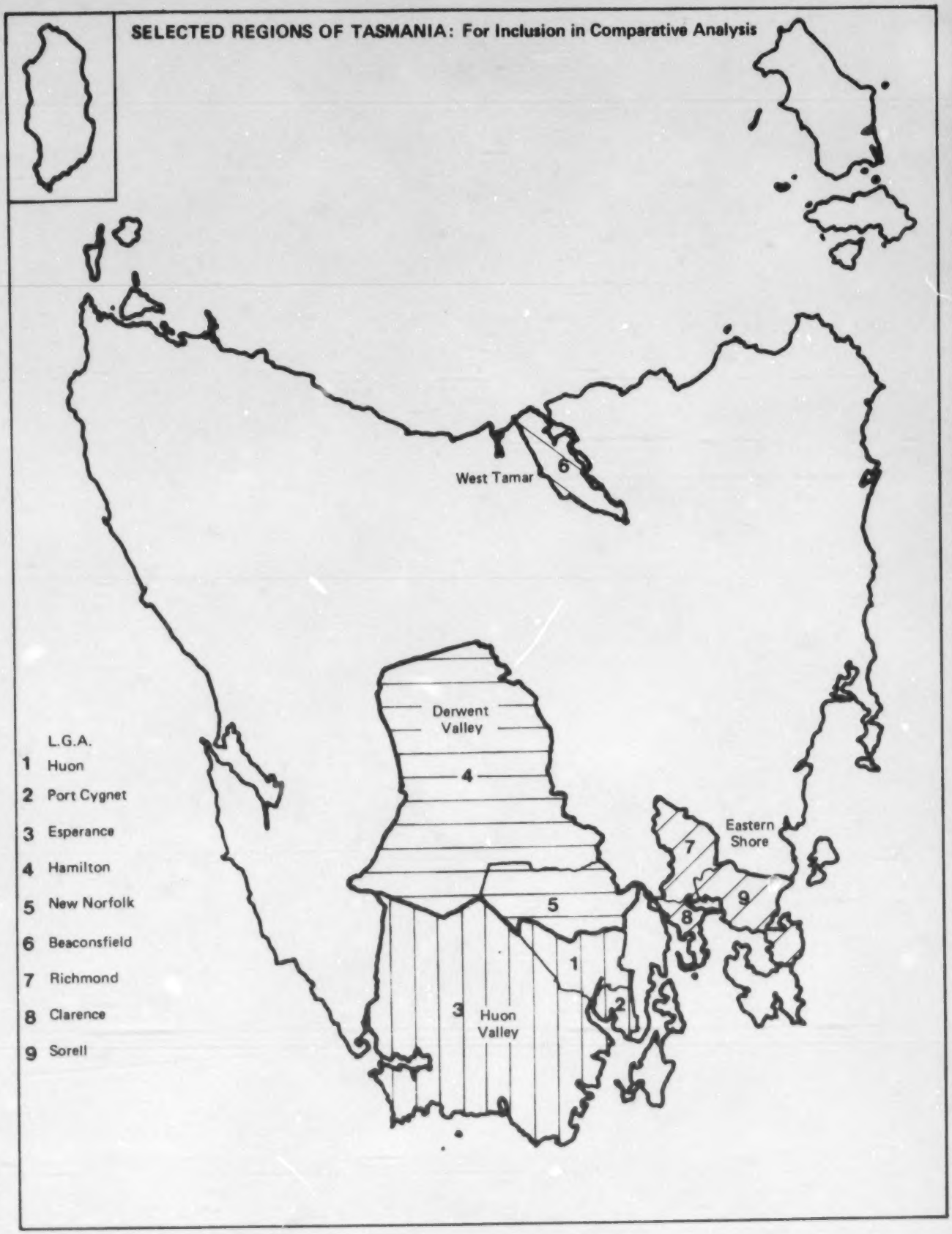
SELECTED REGIONS OF TASMANIA: For Inclusion in Comparative Analysis
West Tamar
6
Derwent Valley
4
Eastern Shore
7
9
8
5
1
2
3
Huon Valley
L.G.A.
1 Huon
2 Port Cygnet
3 Esperance
4 Hamilton
5 New Norfolk
6 Beaconsfield
7 Richmond
8 Clarence
9 Sorell

Table 5.2

Tasmania: urbanization in selected regions

Region[13]	Proportion of total population living in urban areas			
	500+	1000+	5000+	10 000+
Huon	35.4%	13.6%	-	-
Eastern Shore	87.3%	86.2%	77.8%	77.8%
Derwent Valley	59.8%	49.1%	49.1%	-
West Tamar	64.9%	53.1%	44.9%	-

government schools but not with non-government schools where there are few at secondary level outisde the two major cities. Most of the comparisons in this section refer to government schools only.

Finally, it may be noted that each of the regions is defined in accordance with local government areas, thus allowing the ready use of census data.

Staff numbers

Among educational administrators and teachers there is wide agreement that the level of staffing provision is the most important indicator of resource provision. Accordingly, the first resource examined in the comparative analysis is the provision of professional and support staff.

The simplest measure of teacher provision is the pupil-teacher ratio. In primary education no significant

[13]The Huon contains three municipalities with a 1976 population(preliminary) of 9859; the Eastern Shore is defined as the municipalities of Clarence, Sorell and Richmond with a population of 48147; the Derwent Valley is defined as the municipalities of New Norfolk and Hamilton with a population of 13 594; and West Tamar is defined as the municipality of Beaconsfield with a 1976 population of 12 347.

differences between the four regions were found: in each region pupil-teacher ratios were in the range 22:1 to 25:1 in both primary schools and the primary sections of district schools (see Appendix 5, Table 5). In the secondary sections of district schools pupil-teacher ratios for the Huon and the West Tamar were considerably lower than in the other two regions. This is indicated in the following table.

Table 5.3

Comparison between school regions: secondary students and teachers in district schools.

School region	Secondary enrolment	Secondary teachers (full-time)	Pupil-teacher ratio
Huon Valley	110	12	9.2:1
Derwent Valley	301	22	13.7:1
Eastern Shore	177	16	11.2:1
West Tamar	141	15	9.4:1

So far as high schools are concerned, pupil-teacher ratios are similar in each of the four regions, ranging from 15.2:1 on the Eastern Shore to 16.2:1 in the West Tamar.

In the Tasmanian Education Department, statistics on the size of English classes in Year 7 are collected on an annual basis. It was considered that these would give a valuable indication of the relative level of staff provision in high schools. It was found that the Huonville High school had smaller English classes (averaging 26) than high schools on the Eastern Shore (30) or the West Tamar (34). Comparable information for the Derwent Valley is not available since English "classes" in the traditional form were not organized. In Year 9 the average size of English classes was smaller in the Huon than in any of the other regions (see Table 5.4).

Table 5.4

Comparison between school regions: size of English classes

Region	Average size of English classes	
	Year 7	Year 9
Huon Valley	26.2	26.5
Derwent Valley	n.a.	29.7
Eastern Shore	29.6	27.5
West Tamar	30.1	27.9
Mean	29.1	27.7

In terms of the overall provision of teachers it is clear that the Huon is not disadvantaged. On the contrary, at secondary level it is more generously provided with secondary staff than the other regions examined. The important goal of the state system, giving all children an equal share of teaching resources, has been realized so far as the overall provision of professional staff is concerned.

Information about the provision of part-time support staff is less clear-cut. It is generally accepted that the provision of support staff, both professional and para-professional, is a valuable resource for schools. The provision of teacher aides in the Huon schools is comparable with schools in the other regions (Table 5.5), but the evidence suggests that they may be inadequately provided with professional support staff.

This conclusion about professional support staff is based mainly on the fact that the Huon schools allocate a relatively large percentage of their Schools Commission funds to the provision of professional, part-time staff. Huonville High school allocated 23 per cent of its 1977 recurrent Schools Commission funds in this way. This compares with 12 per cent in the Eastern Shore high schools as a whole, with five per cent at Clarence High and none

Table 5.5

Distribution of teacher aides in schools in four selected regions of Tasmania : 1976

Teacher Aides	Huon Valley	Derwent Valley	Eastern Shore	West Tamar
Number	17	32	78	18
Full-time equivalents	8.8	13.6	36.0	9.4
Ratio to teaching staff *	1:12.5	1:10.8	1:13.3	1:13.7

*Teacher aides are in full-time equivalents.

at all at Rose Bay High school.

Since the Schools Commission is the main source of funding by which Schools can employ part-time staff to overcome limitations in their staff resources, the difference in funding priorities between the Huon and the Eastern Shore regions is reflected in the ratio of additional teaching staff to normal teaching staff. In the Huon the ratio is 1:37 and in the Eastern Shore it is 1:63. (Table 5.6). The difference between the two regions is an important one because it suggests that the Huon schools may not be as adequately provided with full-time professional support staff as Eastern Shore schools.

Table 5.6

Distribution of part-time teaching staff in schools in four selected regions of Tasmania : 1976

Part-time teaching staff	Huon Valley	Derwent Valley	Eastern Shore	West Tamar
Number	19	20	40	19
Full-time equivalents	3.0	3.5	7.6	3.6
Ratio to teaching staff*	1:36.6	1:42.2	1:63.0	1:35.8

*Part-time teachers are in full-time equivalents.

In 1976, Huonville High school had a librarian, a guidance officer, a social worker, a speech and drama teacher and a special teacher. Of these, the guidance officer and the social worker had some responsibilities in relation to other schools in the Huon area. Students needing speech therapy had to travel to Hobart, which in itself can be seen as a disadvantage.

Assessing this level of staff provision is difficult. There is no clear-cut definition of support staff and seemingly, no overall policy governing provision to schools. Some aspects seem standard - most high schools have the services of a librarian and a guidance officer for example. The problem lies in the provision of staff such as remedial and special teachers, where provision is based on an assessment of need. Huonville and Warrane High schools for example, had similar enrolments in 1976, but Warrane, which is recognised as a highly disadvantaged school, had two full-time and one part-time remedial teachers compared with one full-time at Huonville.

The Schools Commission has now suggested that some of the measures used to indicate levels of need in a school (such as the socio-economic status of the area, may not be appropriate for country schools. It is probable that educational outcomes are a much more reliable indicator of need and it is apparent that the Huon's need for professional support staff cannot be fully assessed until these outcomes have been examined.

One final point should be made about the provision of support staff to country schools. Remedial teachers, speech therapists and special teachers are in demand. Possibly they could be encouraged to teach in country schools if they were given greater incentives, or if an efficient alternative method of delivering such services to a number of country schools could be developed.

Staff Characteristics

The age distribution of teaching staff in all Government schools in the study was investigated primarily to test the assumption that country schools have a larger proportion of young teachers than urban schools. To conform with the Schools Commission break-down, a "young" teacher was regarded as under 26. The results of the investigation show that in comparison with the other three regions, Huon schools do not have disproportionate numbers of young teachers on their staff (Appendix 5, Tables 9-11).

The age distribution of Huon teachers was also compared with figures provided by the Schools Commission, showing the age distribution of teachers in Australian Government schools in 1974. Again there is no evidence to support the assumption that this country region has an ur ique number of young teachers.

Table 5.7

Distribution of teachers by age - Huon schools compared with Australian schools[14]

Schools	Younger than 26 years	26-30 years	Older than 30 years
Primary -			
Australia	35%	20%	45%
Huon	32%	19%	49%
Secondary			
Australia	31%	25%	44%
Huon	22%	32%	46%

However a further analysis of urban/rural differences in the age distribution of teachers in the four regions examined, produced interesting results.(Appendix 5, Tables 12 and 13). No differences were found between urban

[14] Australia. Schools Commission, Report for the Triennium 1976-1978 (Canberra : A.G.P.S., 1975), Table 4.10, p. 41.

and rural secondary school teachers but the proportion of young rural primary teachers (33 per cent) was significantly higher than the corresponding proportion among urban primary teachers (20 per cent) providing some support for the view that country schools have a larger proportion of young teachers on their staff.

Across the four regions examined, district schools had a larger proportion of young teachers on their staff (35 per cent) than either the primary schools (21 per cent) or the high schools (23 per cent) in the study. (Appendix 5, Table 14). It should be emphasized, however, that there was considerable variation between the district schools in the different regions in Tasmania, a phenomenon reported elsewhere in this survey. In the Derwent Valley, 44 per cent of the district school staff was found to be under 26 and the average age of teachers was 28. By way of contrast in the West Tamar only 23 per cent of the district school staff was under 26 and the average age of teachers was 40, while in the Huon, 31 per cent of the staff was under 26 and the average age of district school teachers was 32.

Examination of the sex distribution of teachers in all Huon schools shows that there are approximately two male teachers to every three female teachers in the Huon. This ratio is similar to that in all schools in Tasmania and differs little from that in the other three regions studied (Appendix 5, Table 15). However, the sex distribution of teachers varied sharply between the three types of school in the Huon. In the high school, males outnumber females 2:1 whereas the opposite was found in the district schools. In the primary schools only one-fifth of the teaching staff was male. Similar variations are reflected in staffing patterns in all Tasmanian schools (Appendix 5, Table 16).

One of the more important staff characteristics investigated was the distribution of teachers according to the number of years of tertiary study completed.

Looking first at teachers in primary schools and high schools, the Huon teachers were found to be similar to their counterparts in the other three regions (Appendix 5, Tables 17 and 18). Not unexpectedly, high school teachers had more years of tertiary education than primary school teachers. In the Huon, three-quarters of the high school staff were found to have three or more years of tertiary study and only one staff member had less than two years.

The trend in the Huon primary schools was quite different. Very few of the teachers (8 per cent) had more than three years tertiary experience and the majority (57 per cent) had two years or less.

When the levels of tertiary education among district school teachers were examined, marked differences were found between the four regions (Appendix 5, Table 19). In the Huon area, the Eastern Shore and the West Tamar, where primary enrolments make up more than three-quarters of the total district school enrolments, investigation showed that the district schools are staffed in the same way as primary schools. Approximately half of the staff (in the case of the Huon district schools, the proportion was 54 per cent) had only two, or less, years of tertiary study. In the Derwent Valley, where secondary students comprise a larger proportion of the total district school enrolments, three-quarters of the staff had three or more years of tertiary study, which is a pattern in keeping with high school staffing structure. No attempt is made to make a qualitative statement about this finding. Possibly, district schools with relatively small enrolments are disadvantaged by the overall level of tertiary training among staff. On the other hand, teacher experience is also important. In district schools in the Derwent Valley, the staff as a whole have a relatively high level of tertiary education, but they also tend to be unusually young, a factor which might well be taken into account.

A further staff characteristic investigated was the participation of staff in teacher development activities conducted through the southern Teacher's Centre in Hobart. It was believed that participation by teachers in the Huon schools might be less than that of teachers in the areas closer to Hobart. This was because such courses are often held in Hobart, which would involve Huon teachers in travelling. Country schools also have the additional problem of finding relief staff.

At present, such courses are usually short, 2-3 day seminars designed for teachers to become more familiar with a particular problem or area of teaching. Although it is departmental policy to encourage school-based seminars, for the study only non-school based courses, with a subject and/or student orientation were used. Participation in such courses possibly indicates a higher degree of effort than participation in school-based seminars, or administrative oriented seminars such as Principal's Conferences or Infant Mistress Seminars.

Secondly, only full-time primary teachers in primary and district schools were counted. Secondary school teachers were excluded chiefly on the grounds that the courses relevant to them are often conducted by subject associations, making access to records difficult.

The investigation showed no differences between primary teachers in the two rural regions and primary teachers in the two urban regions. Approximately half of the primary school teachers in all four regions applied for entry to teacher development courses in 1976, and approximately 70 per cent of those who applied, actually attended courses.

On this basis, it is reasonable to suggest that country teachers may be no less interested in further training than teachers in urban areas, despite the added difficulties involved in participation. On the other hand, no differentiation was made between teachers in the northern

part of the Huon and those at Dover District School, for example. The evidence is certainly not sufficient to rule out the possibility that distance is a crucial factor in "...discouraging teachers from participation in In-service training courses."[15]

Staff Mobility

A frequently mentioned aspect of rural disadvantage is that country schools are likely to have a higher proportion of inexperienced staff members than urban schools. For the study, an inexperienced or beginning teacher was considered to be one coming direct from training as well as those re-admitted to the teaching service after not having taught for some time.

No evidence was found to indicate that the Huon schools have, "more than their fair share of ... inexperienced staff members."[16] (Appendix 5, Tables 20-22). Similarly no differences were found between teachers in urban and rural schools. (Appendix 5, Tables 23 and 24).

District schools however, were found once again to vary sharply from one region to another. The Huon district schools apparently have an unusually low proportion of beginning teachers on their staff, while the Derwent Valley schools have a comparatively high proportion. Read in conjunction with earlier findings, it seems that the staff of Derwent Valley district schools is likely to be younger, less experienced and have a higher level of tertiary education than district schools in the other three regions.

Staff stability is another factor often referred to in describing rural disadvantage,

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[15]See Fyfield, Rights & Inequality in Education, p.90.

[16]A.S.C., Report for the Triennium 1976-1978, paragraph 6.17, p.78.

"...the children suffer most of all from high staff turn-over, because the conditions for teachers are rarely sufficiently attractive for them to feel as well off as their urban colleagues."[17]

As the quote suggests, it is frequently assumed that country schools have a relatively high turn-over of staff and that many teachers, particularly young ones, view country appointments as stepping stones to more desirable positions. While the latter assumption is largely concerned with attitudes, it is also reflected in the length of a teacher's appointment to the same school. This aspect of staff mobility and staff turn-over are discussed below.

Between August 1975 and August 1976, the Huon schools had a total turn-over in staff of 29 per cent, compared with 33 per cent in all of the regions combined. There were variations between the regions, but the evidence suggests that the Huon schools are no more disadvantaged by high turn-over of staff than other schools. (Appendix 5, Tables 25-27).

Looking at district schools as a separate entity again, it was found that the overall loss rate was 34 per cent compared with 39 per cent in all primary schools and 28 per cent in the study's high schools. The different regions varied considerably from a 52 per cent turn-over in the Eastern Shore district schools to a low 27 per cent in the West Tamar region.

No significant differences were found between urban and rural schools in respect of staff turn-over (Appendix 5, Tables 28 and 29).

The table below shows the average length of appointment to the same school for teachers in the Huon area. This is compared with the results of a survey into teacher

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[17] A.S.C., Report for the Triennium 1976-1978, para. 6.5, 0.74.

movement, carried out by the Research Branch of the Department and using a state-wide, random sample of teachers.[18]

Table 5.8

Average length of appointment to the same school - Huon teachers compared with a random sample of Tasmanian teachers.

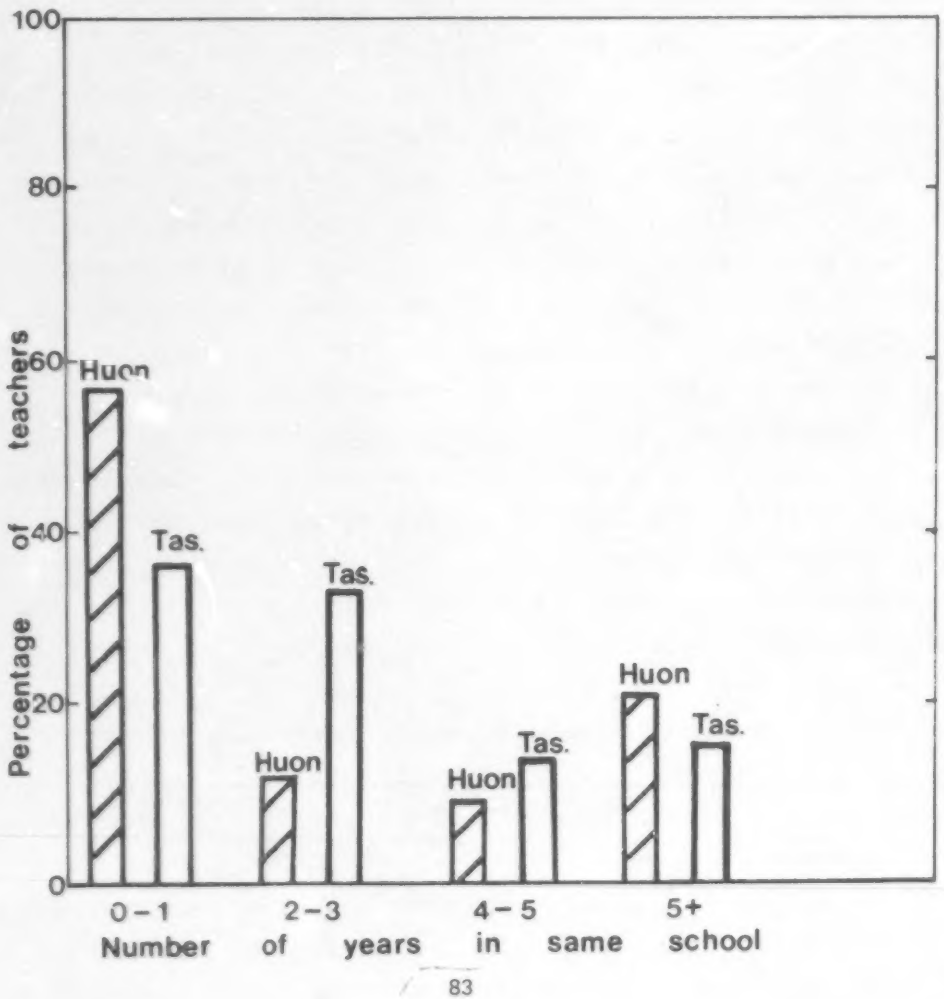
	Primary		High		District		All Schools	
	Tas	Huon	Tas	Huon	Tas	Huon	Tas	Huon
Number of teachers	251	33	90	33	308	44	649	110
Total number of years at same school	807	119	335	135	1247	175	2389	429
Average length of appointment to same school	3.2	3.6	3.7	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.7	3.9

Overall, no significant difference was found between the Huon schools and the sample schools in the average length of appointment to the same school, but there was a significant difference in the range of time that teachers had been at the same schools. Teachers at the primary schools in the Huon were more likely to have been at the same school for less than two years, than the sample of primary teachers. (see Figure below). Taken together with an earlier finding, this does seem to suggest that young primary teachers in country schools may not stay at the one school for long.

[18] Tasmania. Education Department, Research Branch, Movement of Teachers. Survey Report No. 66. Hobart, 1977.

Figure 5.1

Length of appointment to the same school: frequency distribution for Huon primary school teachers compared with a random sample of Tasmanian primary school teachers.



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5.3 Financial and material resource provision

Introduction

Assessing the level of financial and material resource provision to the Huon schools was limited in some areas by the difficulty of obtaining quantitative information which would enable the Huon schools to be compared with other schools.

With regard to capital works, minor works and school maintenance, the effect of inflation was a major problem since it meant that there was no reliable way of comparing expenditure in schools over a period of years. No evidence was found to indicate that the Huon schools are particularly discriminated against in any of these respects, but it was frequently suggested that country schools may be handicapped by the standard of the school accommodation and that maintenance is likely to present a particular problem in country areas. It is not possible to make a value judgement about overall differences between city schools and country schools. However most city high schools have been built in the last 15-20 years, whereas most country schools are older. Hence country high schools may require more frequent renovation and maintenance, simply because they tend to be older.

There is also the added problem for many country schools that maintenance work gangs are based in the regional offices of the Education Department. Apparently, this often results in minor jobs in the more isolated schools being put off until a trip to the area seems warranted. The Schools Commission now provides for schools to spend up to $500 on ground development and minor works from recurrent funds. This is a valuable provision, but it still seems slightly inequitable that some smaller schools may need to use their funds in this way, because of deficiencies in the present system of carrying out school maintenance.

Research into other aspects of financial and material resources was similarly limited by the problems involved in obtaining information. There is little doubt that school levies and money raised by parents and friends associations make up an important source of funding for most schools. It also seems probable that some country schools may be disadvantaged in these respects, either because of small student numbers or because their student population is widely scattered. However, it was anticipated that records of this expenditure would be hard to obtain and the idea of further research was discarded. Similarly, a comparison of school facilities such as libraries, gymnasiums, changing rooms etc., was considered likely to be unreliable unless based on individual and personal assessment and this was considered outside the scope of the report.

One important area of resource provision for which information was readily available concerns the allocation of funds for education and this provides the focus of the following discussion.

The allocation of funds for education

With the exception of money provided by the Schools Commission, funds for education are allocated to Tasmanian government schools on a basis which is essentially non-discriminatory but which takes into account school size, school type (whether primary or secondary) and school location. This results in benefits to smaller schools and it is apparent that the Huon Valley schools as a whole are not disadvantaged by this system. Table 5.9 showing the requisition to schools for materials and equipment in 1975/76 shows overall per capita expenditure in both the Huon Valley and Derwent Valley schools to be comparable with schools in the urban regions of the study. It also clearly reflects the departmental policy of providing small primary schools with an extra loading for materials and equipment.

Table 5.9

Annual requisition for materials and equipment for schools in four selected regions of Tasmania - 1975/76

School region and type of school	Amount *	Per Capita
Huon Valley	$	$
District	9394	13
Primary	10398	15
High	13702	23
Derwent Valley		
District	12869	16
Primary	20875	15
High	16025	21
Eastern Shore		
District	10945	15
Primary	71445	13
High	68659	22
West Tamar		
District	11315	14
Primary	11662	12
High	20713	21

*These figures apply only to government schools and do not include Schools Commission funds.

No attempt is made in this section to discuss expenditure on teachers' salaries or on school personnel. As indicated previously, there is no reason to believe that the Huon schools are disadvantaged in the overall level of school staff provision.

The most valuable information about levels of funding came from inquiry into the allocation of Schools Commission funds. This is recognized as an important source of funding for schools and money is allocated to schools differentially on an educational needs basis. As most of

the schools in the Huon Valley have high educational needs indices,[19] the research was expected to show the level of discrimination in favour of the Huon schools. Table 5.10, showing the allocation of Schools Commission funds for recurrent primary and recurrent secondary expenses in 1977, demonstrates clearly that in comparison with schools in the urban regions of the study, the Huon Valley schools do benefit considerably from this system of differential fund allocation. Schools in the Derwent Valley also do well in the allocation of Schools Commission funds, particularly at the primary level. The relatively high per capita primary allocation in the Derwent Valley can probably be attributed to the fact that the region has a comparatively large number of small primary schools, with high educational needs indices. Under the Schools Commission system of funding, each of these schools receives a base grant as well as the additional grant allocated on the basis of the school's needs index.

Table 5.10

Schools Commission Program 1977 - Recurrent primary and recurrent secondary allocations to schools in four selected regions of Tasmania.

School region*	Primary		District		High	
	Amount	Per Capita	Amount	Per Capita	Amount	Per Capita
	$	$	$	$	$	$
Huon Valley	22481	31	22281	33	29404	46
Derwent Valley	49090	38	24419	33	31844	43
Eastern Shore	136948	23	27507	34	138361	43
West Tamar	17471	17	23420	28	33082	36

*Government schools only (not including Special Schools).

The Schools Commission also provides additional money for schools under a number of special programs. These include the disadvantaged schools program, the special

[19] Details of the educational needs indices of Huon schools are given on p. 24 above.

education program, the migrant education program, the innovations program and teacher development.

The migrant education program obviously has no relevance in the Huon region and none of the Huon schools have received funds under this program. The results of a survey of migrant needs carried out by the Education Department in 1975 indicated no need in the Huon Valley.[20] The following is a comment on the survey,

> Since the commencement of the Child Migrant Education Programme in 1970 there has been no demand from any school in the Huon district for special assistance with teaching English as a second language or for the provision of advisory or consultant services to classroom teachers. The needs of the Huon Valley may be great, but they are certainly not compounded by a large intake of non-English speaking migrants.

The participation of Huon schools in the teacher development program has already been discussed and as far as can be ascertained, only one grant has been made to the Huon schools for an innovations project when one of the Catholic schools received a grant of $1,385 for an outdoor education project.

The two most important programs as far as the Huon is concerned, are the disadvantaged schools program and the special education program. Under the disadvantaged schools program, various schools in Tasmania are regarded as being priority project schools largely on the basis of their educational needs indices. There is no fixed basis for allocating funds to priority project schools and those involved are funded on the strength of individual submissions presented to the Priority Projects Committee. This seems to be an important anomaly in the system. It seems paradoxical that schools, which have been quantitatively assessed as having greater educational needs than other

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[20] Tasmania. Education Department, Survey of Migrant Needs in Tasmanian Schools, (Hobart: Education Department, 1975).

schools, should then be funded on a qualitative basis. Some country schools, particularly the smaller ones, may have neither the resources nor the expertise to prepare quality submissions and it seems that the role of the Committee should be more supportive in such cases. Otherwise, the undesirable situation arises of some schools being additionally handicapped because the full extent of their disadvantage is not recognized. It should also be pointed out that a similar system of allocating funds is used for the innovations program.

Thirty-six of the 191 primary and district schools in Tasmania are classified as priority project schools, whereas in the Huon, four out of the seven schools fall into this category. On a per capita basis, this means that 26 per cent of the Huon students receive priority project funds, compared with 15 per cent in Tasmania as a whole. The Huon schools thus receive a proportionately greater share than Tasmanian schools generally. It is important to stress this point because the qualitative element in the funding system makes a direct comparison between schools rather pointless. However, as Table 5.11 shows, in 1977, per capita expenditure in the Huon Valley priority project schools was $32 compared with $37 in the Derwent Valley and $35 in the Eastern Shore. Two of the Catholic schools in the Huon are also priority project schools and in 1976 they received a total of $27,256 and $32,234 in 1977.

Table 5.11

Schools Commission Program - expenditure in priority project schools in four selected regions of Tasmania - 1976 and 1977

School region	Amount*		Per capita expenditure in priority project schools for 1977
	1976 $	1977 $	$
Huon Valley	8750	11300	30
Derwent Valley	22577	25100	36
Eastern Shore	61346	57655	33
West Tamar	Nil	Nil	Nil

*Figures shown are for government schools and do not include special schools. Expenditure on minor works programs is not included in the figures. It should also be noted that the per capita expenditure is for primary and district schools only - Warrane High School which is also a priority project school, is not included.

Table 5.11also shows the variations which occur, not only between schools, but in the amount of funding received from year to year. The amount is mainly influenced of course, by whether or not the submissions presented by schools are funded. But the fluctuations can also reflect changes in how the priority project schools perceive their needs and Table 5.12is included for interest as showing how the emphases in the Huon priority project schools changed between 1976 and 1977.

Table 5.12

Schools Commission Program - details of expenditure in priority project schools in the Huon Valley - 1976 and 1977

Item	1976 Amount	1977 Amount
Teachers	2,170	3,700
Equipment	450	400
Books	3,300	1,400
Teacher Aides	2,100	1,800
Travel	730	2,400
Specialist Staff	-	1,600
TOTAL	$8,750	$11,300

NOTE : expenditure on minor works programs is not included in the table.

As a general point, it might be mentioned that individual schools in Tasmania have a considerable degree of freedom in determining how they will spend their Schools Commission funds in general. On this basis, it might be a worthwhile study to compare how rural schools perceive their needs compared with urban schools. Some reference has already been made to this in discussing the use of funds for additional teaching staff and for minor works, but a

fuller study might be very revealing.

Expenditure on minor works from priority project funds was not included in Tables 5.11 and 5.12 because comparative information was difficult to obtain. However, it seems to be a relatively important aspect of priority project expenditure. Judbury primary school received $9000 in 1976 for a basket-ball court and in 1977 the two Catholic schools received the same amount for extra accommodation and a play-ground.

As regards the Special Education Program, in 1977 the Huon Special School received the sum of $6,500 from the Schools Commission. An additional sum of $2,900 was given to the school for recurrent primary expenses. The total allocation of $9,400 to the Huon school represents five per cent of the State's total Schools Commission allocation for special schools in 1977, whereas the number of students in the Huon school represents just over one per cent of all students in Tasmanian special schools. Again, this seems to suggest that the Huon receives a disproportionately large share of funds.

Conclusions

Most of the discussion in this section has been centred on the allocation of education funds to Huon schools and there was no evidence to suggest that the Huon schools are in any way disadvantaged in this aspect of resource provision. On the contrary, they appear to do very well, particularly in the allocation of Schools Commission funds.

In 1977 the per capita grant for recurrent primary and recurrent secondary expenses was higher in the Huon than in the two urban regions of the study. The Huon schools as a whole, also received a comparatively large share of priority project and special education funds from the Schools Commission. At the same time the system of allocating funds for priority projects and innovation

programs may well be inequitable for some small country schools in that funding is on the basis of quality of submissions received by the funding authorities.

It is probably not unexpected to find that the Huon schools as a whole benefited in the allocation of Schools Commission funds, since the system is intended to discriminate in favour of schools with a large proportion of disadvantaged students. The importance of the research has been to indicate the level of discrimination in favour of schools in country areas. Both the Huon Valley and the Derwent Valley regions obviously benefit considerably from a system which allocates funds on a needs basis.

Evidence about other aspects of financial and material resource provision is less clear-cut, because of a lack of quantitative information. There was nothing to suggest that the Huon schools are particularly disadvantaged by sub-standard accommodation or the need for more frequent maintenance. However, the general findings suggest that in the area of school maintenance particularly, some country schools may be at a disadvantage. Possibly, one solution would be to provide funds for schools to make their own provision for maintenance and renovation.

5.4 Summary

The main findings to emerge from the discussion of educational provision in the Huon Valley can be summarized as follows :

1. The Huon is adequately provided with a range of schools, both government and non-government, offering education from kindergarten through to the end of Year 10.

2. There is no provision for technical or further education or for Higher School Certificate studies in the Huon. The nearest facilities are located at Hobart.

3. A large proportion (57 per cent in 1976) of the Huon's district school students transfer to Huonville High school for secondary education.

4. In most respects, the level of staff provision in the Huon schools is comparable with schools in the other regions of the study. The two exceptions to this are (i) primary school teachers in the Huon stay at the same school a comparatively short time and (ii) there is some indication that the Huon schools may be inadequately provided with professional support staff.

5. The overall level of staff provision to schools in the Derwent Valley region is similar to that in the Huon.

6. Comparisons of staff levels in urban and rural schools indicate no differences except that primary school teachers in rural schools tend to be younger than in urban schools.

7. District schools in the study differed from primary schools and high schools in that :

(i) there is a higher percentage of young teachers (under 26) in the district schools;

(ii) there is no consistent pattern in the levels of tertiary education among district school teachers. The levels vary according to the relationship between primary and secondary enrolments; and

(iii) the district schools vary much more in their overall levels of staff provision than do primary or high schools.

8. There is no evidence to indicate that the Huon schools are disadvantaged in the provision of financial and material resources and the system of allocating funds to schools on a needs basis is of considerable benefit to schools in the Huon Valley.

5.5 Summary and general conclusions.

As mentioned previously, one of the theories most commonly associated with rural disadvantage in Australia is that country schools have a reduced level of educational resource provision. The main aim of the preceding discussion was to examine this theory and to see if the Huon schools are in fact discriminated against in the provision of educational resources.

Staff provision and financial and material resources are considered to be the two most important aspects of resource provision to schools, although it is recognized that others, such as support services for teachers, may be equally valuable.

The data collected indicate that the overall level of staff provision to the Huon schools is not lower than to schools in other parts of Tasmania. The two exceptions to this are the lack of post-secondary and further education facilities in the region and the possibility that the Huon schools may be inadequately provided with professional support staff, particularly remedial and special teachers. As this report is aimed primarily at alleviating educational disadvantage in the Huon, these two gaps in resource provision have important implications for the final recommendations of the report.

On the basis of the discussion in this section of the report, it can reasonably be concluded that educational outcomes in the Huon schools are not unduly influenced by the level of resource provision. An explanation of reduced educational outcomes would need to extend to other possibilities while the provision of additional educational resources would not necessarily improve levels of educational achievement or improve the life chances of young people in the Huon.

This conclusion can only relate specifically to the Huon region, but the overall similarity between urban and rural schools in all four regions examined in the study suggests that rural schools in Tasmania have a similar level of resource provision to urban schools.

This finding has important implications for attacking the problem of rural disadvantage in Tasmania. The virtual elimination of one of the factors directly associated with schools confirms the impressions gained during the course of the study that factors outside the school are most likely to influence educational outcomes in the Huon. These factors are probably deeply ingrained in the social structure of a rural area like the Huon and are likely to reflect the attitudes of parents and the community in general towards education. If these attitudes are to be changed, it is evident that some form of liaison between the school and the community is called for and this will require an area approach rather than an individual school approach.

At an even broader level, it is possible to suggest that the situation in the Huon may also be typical of many other country areas in Australia, which have similar population and demographic characteristics. On the other hand, the situation may be quite different in the isolated parts of larger States, and there is a very obvious need for research into the factors influencing rural disadvantage throughout Australia as a whole. This issue was raised at the National Conference on Country Education held in Launceston in June, 1977, when a national survey of country areas was proposed on the grounds that,

> "... the problems associated with establishing policies relating to country education stem from a diversity in the prevailing conditions in the various regions and from a lack of documented evidence of the provision of services, of the

problems of children in isolated areas and of the changing patterns of rural life and job opportunity in Australia." 21

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[21]National Conference on Country Education, A Program for Research into Country Education in Australia (Hobart: Education Department of Tasmania, 1977), p.6.

6. EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES : SCHOOL PARTICIPATION AND STUDENT PERFORMANCE

Educational outcomes in the Huon schools were assessed by examining (i) the retention rates of students for Years 10 and 11; (ii) School Certificate results in English, Mathematics, Science and Social Science for the years 1974, 1975 and 1976; and (iii) student performance in Tasmanian literacy and numeracy testing programs. The results of the research indicate that educational outcomes in the Huon schools are clearly lower than schools in the more urban Eastern Shore and West Tamar regions and, in many cases, are also below the Tasmanian averages.

6.1 School Participation

Investigation of student retention rates in all four regions of the study confirms that a low level of participation in schooling is a general problem in rural areas of Tasmania[1] and is not one confined solely to the Huon region. In both the Huon Valley and the Derwent Valley the rate of student retention to Years 10 and 11 is considerably lower than that found in the two urban regions of the study.

Looking first at retention to Year 10 in the Huon schools, in 1976, 77 per cent of the Year 7 cohort was retained to Year 10 compared with 78 per cent in the Derwent Valley, 87 per cent in the Eastern Shore and a high 95 per cent in the West Tamar region (Table 6.1). The same trend was observed for each year of the study, i.e. 1973-1976.

From a more optimistic viewpoint, the percentage of Huon students who stayed on to Year 10 was a considerable improvement on the previous three years. However, it would be unwise to assume that the 1976 trend will automatically

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[1] See Committee on Secondary Education, Secondary Education in Tasmania, (Hobart: Education Department of Tasmania, 1977), pp. 52-57.

Table 6.1

Retention rates: Year 10 enrolments as a percentage of Year 7 enrolments in high and district schools in four selected regions of Tasmania

School region	1973	1974	1975	1976
Huon Valley	69%	62%	68%	77%
Derwent Valley	66%	77%	76%	78%
Eastern Shore	81%	81%	86%	87%
West Tamar	87%	84%	95%	95%
STATE*	74%	74%	77%	79%

* Source: Annual Report of the Education Department (1970 - 1976).

continue and it should be pointed out that in 1974 and 1975 the rate in the Huon Valley was not only below the average for the State, but was also lower than the Derwent Valley.

Retention to Year 11 in the Huon is disturbingly low. Since 1974 little more than one in eight of all high and district school students in the Huon Valley has continued to the Higher School Certificate (H.S.C.) level, compared with one in four in Tasmania as a whole and one in three in the Eastern Shore region (Table 6.2). If district school students are excluded, the contrast between the regions is emphasised more strongly. Very few students from district schools in Tasmania go on to Secondary Colleges, so a comparison between high schools was considered valid.

Table 6.2

Retention rates: Year 11 enrolments as a percentage of year 7 enrolments in high and district schools in four selected regions of Tasmania.

School region	1974	1975	1976	1977
Huon Valley	11%	12%	11%	14%
Derwent Valley	18%	11%	14%	12%
Eastern Shore	35%	35%	35%	34%
West Tamar	34%	40%	32%	28%
STATE*	28%	29%	30%	28%

* Source: Annual Report of the Education Department (1970-1977).

In 1977, Huonville High School had a Year 11 retention rate of 16 per cent, which compares most unfavourably with 52 per cent at Clarence and Rose Bay and 34 per cent at Riverside. (Table 6.3). The Huonville rate is also lower than that found at Geilston Bay High School and Warrane High School. Both Geilston Bay and Warrane are urban high schools which draw largely from low socio-economic feeder areas, but the comparison between Huonville and Warrane is particularly disturbing, since Warrane ranks very high on the educational needs index and is currently the only high school in Tasmania to be classed as a Priority Project School.

Table 6.3

Retention rates: Year 11 enrolments as a percentage of Year 7 enrolments in high schools in four selected regions of Tasmania

School	1974	1975	1976	1977
Huonville	14%	15%	14%	16%
New Norfolk	24%	14%	17%	15%
Rose Bay	42%	44%	43%	52%
Clarence	46%	41%	51%	52%
Warrane	22%	18%	23%	19%
Geilston Bay	-	-	32%	20%
Riverside	37%	45%	38%	34%

A glance at Table 6.4 shows that the Year 11 retention rate at Huonville has been relatively poor even for a rural school, but it also shows that the rate has been relatively stable for several years. As the general expectation for Tasmania is towards greater retention to Year 11,[2] it seems likely that the rate in the Huon will remain stable, or possibly improve.

[2]Lloyd D. Blazely, A Review of the Likely Future Need for Education Department Hostels in Tasmania. Research Study No. 31. (Hobart: Education Department of Tasmania, 1977), p.2.

Table 6.4

Retention rates: Year 11 enrolments as a percentage of Year 7 enrolments in some country high schools in Tasmania.

School	1974	1975	1976	1977
Scottsdale	14%	22%	17%	13%
Deloraine	22%	21%	19%	15%
Smithton	19%	15%	23%	15%
Huonville	14%	15%	14%	16%
New Norfolk	24%	14%	17%	15%

6.2 School performance

(a) School Certificate results

The Tasmanian School Certificate is taken at the end of the fourth year of secondary education. It is a single subject certificate, requiring no grouping of subjects or prescribed periods of study. The subjects for the certificate may be taken at Levels 1, 11 and 111. The certificates are awarded by the Schools Board of Tasmania on the basis of school assessment and a system of regional moderation is used to determine comparability between schools.

Table 6.5 shows the percentages of Year 7 students gaining School Certificates in English, Mathematics, Social Science and Science for the years 1974 - 1976. Schools in the Huon are compared with those in the other three regions of the study and in the State as a whole.

About one in three of the Year 7 students in the Huon left school without qualifying for a full award, compared with about one in four in Tasmania. This is obviously a reflection of the lower level of student retention in the Huon and has already been discussed. There is also nothing particularly striking about the distribution of Levels 1 and 11 passes in the Huon, which is similar to the State figures and varies slightly from year to year.

The most important aspect of the table is seen as being the small percentage of Huon students who gained Level

111 passes, which is the highest award for the School Certificate. In all four subjects investigated, the Huon is invariably well below the Eastern Shore and West Tamar regions, as well as the State. It is also below the level of the Derwent Valley in English and Social Science.

District schools generally do not offer Level 111 courses in all subjects and it was supposed that the Huon results were influenced by this fact. However, further research showed that the proportion of district school students relative to high school students in the Huon was not large (see Table 6.6) and that district schools in the Huon do offer some Level 111 courses. In 1976, Dover and Geeveston both offered Level 111 English and Dover also offered Level 111 courses in Social Science and Science. There is therefore, no reason to believe that the Huon Level 111 results are unduly weighted by district school students.

Table 6.5

SCHOOL CERTIFICATE RESULTS

Distribution of candidates between Levels 1, 11 and 111 for the years 1974, 1975 and 1976 expressed as a percentage of Grade 7 enrolments

ENGLISH

	Year	Huon Valley %	Derwent Valley %	Eastern Shore %	West Tamar %	State %
Level 1	1974	12	9	7	1	7
	1975	8	8	6	6	8
	1976	11	9	11	10	8
Level II	1974	30	32	26	28	35
	1975	41	37	36	30	37
	1976	36	45	40	44	40
Level III	1974	15	27	26	45	32
	1975	17	13	35	48	31
	1976	20	34	28	29	29

MATHEMATICS

	Year	Huon Valley %	Derwent Valley %	Eastern Shore %	West Tamar %	State %
Level I	1974	17	25	12	9	14
	1975	12	17	19	12	16
	1976	20	22	21	13	17
Level II	1974	28	37	27	36	35
	1975	42	35	34	42	34
	1976	27	42	33	47	36
Level III	1974	12	6	21	28	25
	1975	13	11	26	30	25
	1976	18	9	25	23	23

SOCIAL SCIENCE

	Year	Huon Valley %	Derwent Valley %	Eastern Shore %	West Tamar %	State %
Level I	1974	11	8	9	4	8
	1975	7	5	5	7	8
	1976	10	14	8	6	8
Level II	1974	26	38	20	33	32
	1975	38	39	26	39	34
	1976	41	40	29	48	35
Level III	1974	16	23	27	37	36
	1975	18	26	28	38	32
	1976	16	19	25	29	30

SCIENCE

	Year	Huon Valley %	Derwent Valley %	Eastern Shore %	West Tamar %	State %
Level I	1974	13	17	11	7	9
	1975	9	13	16	7	10
	1976	18	12	18	11	13
Level II	1974	25	36	21	21	26
	1975	28	42	33	40	30
	1976	23	44	36	50	34
Level III	1974	21	16	28	47	38
	1975	28	13	28	36	36
	1976	24	17	32	22	31

Table 6.6

District school students as a percentage of total Year 10 enrolments in 1976 (row percentage)

School Region	District School Students %	High School Students %	Total 100%
Huon Valley	10	90	(N-169)
Derwent Valley	24	76	(N-208)
Eastern Shore	3	97	(N-765)
West Tamar	16	84	(N-293)
State	10	90	(N-5775)

There is some dissatisfaction with existing School Certificate procedures and some schools have already dropped out of the system. The Committee on Secondary Education has proposed that, "... the School Certificate as it exists be phased out and be replaced by certificates issued by individual schools"[3] and future school-leavers will probably find themselves assessed on participation in all aspects of

[3] Secondary Education in Tasmania, p.123.

the school curriculum as well as on achievement. Nevertheless, the School Certificate results in the Huon are an important indicator of educational outcomes. Student performance, in terms of the number of Level 111 passes, is well below the expected level. Whether this is due to low ability, low aspirations or poor quality teaching is not known.

(b) Literacy and numeracy tests

The results of tests of basic literacy and numeracy skills among 14 year old and 10 year old Tasmanian students indicate that student performance in the Huon schools is very low.

The tests of 14 year olds referred to developed out of the national testing programs conducted by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) in 1975. In October of the same year, the Tasmanian Research Branch followed up the ACER survey by testing all 14 year olds in Tasmanian Government schools in basic literacy and numeracy skills, using two of the original ACER tests - 14 R (literacy) and 14N (numeracy).[4]

Both 14R and 14N are 33 item, objective tests, which are considered to be short, simple tests with no 'trick' questions. The aim of the tests was to indicate basic levels for the skills involved, rather than to discriminate between students at the upper end of the performance scale.

The Huon results were analysed statistically and when reference is made in the text to a 'significant' difference between the Huon schools and other schools, the difference was found to be significant at the five per cent level.

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[4]For a full report on the Tasmanian program see Lloyd D. Blazely, Survey of Basic Skills of Reading and Numeracy of 14 Year Old Tasmanian Students. Research Study No. 21 (Hobart: Education Department of Tasmania, 1976).

On both tests the mean scores obtained by Huon students are significantly lower than the State averages. Similarly, the standard deviations are higher, indicating a wider than average spread of attainment in the Huon schools (Table 6.7).

Table 6.7

Results of tests 14R and 14N. Huon schools compared with Tasmanian schools 1975.

School Region	14R			14N		
	No. of Students	Mean Score	s.d.	No. of Students	Mean Score	s.d.
Huon Valley	179	25.9	4.73	179	23.66	6.82
Tasmania	5090	27.48	4.20	5080	25.84	5.93

The Huon results were then examined more closely to see where the major weaknesses lay. In the report prepared by the Research Branch for the State program, it was suggested that for both tests a score of 25 or less out of the possible 33 items, indicated the likelihood of students having "... fundamental weaknesses likely to inhibit learning over a wide area of the curriculum." As Table 6.8 indicates, more than one-third of the Huon students can be considered "at risk" in numeracy skills. Both groups are significantly larger than the groups found in the total population. It is also worth drawing attention to the fact that only a very small group of Huon students scored well on the literacy test. Evidently, the level of literacy is a particular problem for the Huon schools since it is probable that the low mean score for test 14R is as much the result of too few high scoring students, as of too many low scoring students.

The State testing programs showed district school students as generally having a lower level of attainment than high school students and there are undoubtedly, proportionately more students "at risk" in both numeracy and literacy skills in the Huon district schools than at Huonville High School. However, the performance of the Huon district school

Table 6.8

Distribution of scores for tests 14R and 14N. Huon schools compared with Tasmanian schools, 1975 (row percentages).

Test and school region	Scores obtained			
14R	30+ %	29 to 26 %	25 or less %	Total 100%
Huon Valley	23	40	37	(N-177)
Tasmania	38	36	26	(N-5090)
14N				
Huon Valley	26	22	52	(N-177)
Tasmania	34	27	39	(N-5080)

students is not significantly different from that of all district school students in the State[5] (Table 6.9), whereas students at Huonville High School have a significantly lower level of attainment than all high school students (Table 6.10).

Table 6.9

Distribution of scores for tests 14R and 14N. Huon district schools compared with Tasmanian district schools 1975. (row percentages)

Test and school region	Scores obtained			
	30+ %	26 to 29 %	25 or less %	Total 100%
14R				
Huon district schools	8	39	53	(N-36)
Tasmanian district schools	23	34	43	(N-666)
14N				
Huon district schools	11	22	67	(N-36)
Tasmanian district schools	17	23	59	(N-667)

[5]It must be stressed that this statement refers to the fact that no statistically significant difference was established between the two groups.

Table 6.10

Distribution of scores for tests 14R and 14N Huonville High School compared with all Tasmanian high schools,1975 (row percentages).

Test and school region	Scores obtained			
	30+ %	26 to 29 %	25 or less %	Total 100%
14R				
Huonville High School	28	40	32	(N-141)
Tasmanian high schools	41	36	24	(N-4424)
14N				
Huonville High School	30	22	48	(N-141)
Tasmanian high schools	37	28	36	(N-4413)

One of the more important findings of the State literacy and numeracy survey was the superior performance of urban high school students compared with rural high school students and the lower level of attainment at Huonville High School reflects this finding. As Table 6.11 shows, students at Huonville performed worse than urban high school students but are comparable with all rural high school students.

Table 6.11

Distribution of scores for tests 14R and 14N. Huonville High School compared with Tasmanian urban high schools and Tasmanian rural high schools.

School region	Test 14R		Test 14N	
	No. of students	Mean Score	No. of Students	Mean Score
Huonville High School	141	26.57	141	24.60
Urban high schools	3256	27.98	3248	26.50
Rural high schools	1168	27.29	1168	25.79

At the primary level, the results of a reading test (10R) for 10 year olds were used as an indicator of educational outcomes in the Huon schools. The 10R test was developed essentially as a follow up to the testing of 14 year olds in Tasmania. The test was prepared by the Education Department and included several grade 5 teachers on the design panel. Designed to test, "... the basic operational reading skill of 10 year old students", the 35 item objective test was administered to all 10 year olds in Tasmanian government schools in October, 1976.[6]

As with the 14R and 14N tests, the individual test items were straightforward and described as varied, short and simple. Student performance was categorized in three sections - a score of more than 31 was seen as indicating undoubted proficiency; a score of 28 to 31 indicated probable adequacy in reading skills with some reservations and less than 28 was regarded as indicative of significant weaknesses in reading skills.

The results of the 10R test in the Huon schools follow a similar pattern to those of the 14R and 14N tests with Huon students having a significantly lower level of attainment than all Tasmanian students. The mean score of the Huon students was 26.84 compared with the State mean of 28.38 (Table 6.12).

Table 6.12

Results of test 10R. Huon schools compared with Tasmanian schools, 1975.

School region	No. of students	Mean score	s.d.
Huon Valley	140	26.84	7.34
Tasmania	5837	28.38	5.68

[6]See Fran Broadby, Survey of Basic Skills of Reading of 10 Year Old Tasmanian Students. Research Study No. 27. (Hobart: Education Department of Tasmania, 1977).

The standard deviation for the Huon test indicated a wider than average spread of attainment amongst the Huon students and this is demonstrated clearly by the distribution of scores at the three levels of performance (Table 6.13). It is important to note that the proportion of Huon students who scored well on the test is comparable with the State proportion, but there is a larger than average group of 10 year olds in the Huon who fall into the "at risk" category. It is these students who are responsible for the Huon's low mean score.

Table 6.13

Distribution of scores for test 10R. Huon schools compared with Tasmanian schools, 1976. (row percentages).

School region	Scores obtained			
	31+ %	28-31 %	28 or less %	Total 100%
Huon Valley	37	20	43	(N-140)
Tasmania	42	28	30	(N-5837)

The results of the 10R test differ from those of the 14 year olds' testing program in that there is no apparent difference in attainment between children in the Huon district schools and those in the Huon primary schools (Table 6.14). Whereas, at the 14 year old level there was a difference between the district schools and the high school. This finding is probably not unexpected, but it is consistent with the notion that the more able children tend to leave the district schools at the end of primary education and transfer to Huonville High School.

Finally, the results of both the 14 year olds and the 10 year olds in the Huon were compared with the results of their counterparts in the other three regions of the study. As was anticipated, there is a clear distinction between the urban and rural regions, with students in the urban regions having a significantly higher level of attainment on all

three tests. (Table 6.15).

Table 6.14

Distribution of scores for test 10R. Huon primary schools compared with Huon district schools, 1976 (row percentages)

Schools	Scores obtained			
	31+ %	28-31 %	28 or less %	Total 100%
Huon primary school	38	17	45	(N-87)
Huon district school	35	25	40	(N-53)

Table 6.15

Results of tests of basic skills among 10 and 14 year olds in four selected regions of Tasmania

School region	14R		14N		10R	
	No. of Students	Mean Score	No. of Students	Mean Score	No. of Students	Mean Score
Huon Valley	177	25.90	177	23.66	140	26.84
Derwent Valley	217	26.66	217	23.58	195	26.91
Eastern Shore	687	27.34	671	25.77	637	29.38
West Tamar	216	28.13	216	27.65	237	29.60
STATE	5090	27.48	5080	25.84	5837	28.38

6.3 Summary and conclusions

To summarize this discussion of educational outcomes in the Huon schools, it was found that :

1. The retention of students to Year 10 in the Huon schools is comparable with the State average, but considerably lower than in Eastern Shore and West Tamar schools.

2. About one in eight of Huon students is retained to Year 11, compared with one in four in Tasmania as a whole and one in three in the Eastern Shore region.

3. The percentage of Huon students gaining Level 111 passes in English, Mathematics, Social Science and Science is well below the figures for the Eastern Shore and West Tamar regions and for Tasmania as a whole.

4. Huon 14 year olds had a significantly lower level of attainment on tests of basic literacy and numeracy skills than all Tasmanian 14 year olds.

5. No significant difference in performance was found between 14 year olds in Huon district schools and those in all district schools throughout the State.

6. Huonville High school 14 year olds had a significantly lower level of attainment than 14 year olds in urban high schools but were comparable with 14 year olds in all rural high schools in Tasmania.

7. Over one-third of the Huon 14 year olds can be considered "at risk" in terms of literary skills and one-half are "at risk" in terms of numeracy skills.

8. Ten year old students in the Huon performed significantly worse than all Tasmanian 10 year olds on a test of basic reading skills.

9. The group of Huon 10 year olds who are "at risk" in basic reading skills is much above average size.

Conclusions

On the basis of the measures used to indicate educational outcomes in this discussion, there can be no doubt that the Huon schools are well below the State averages. The level of participation in schooling is comparatively low, overall student performance is relatively poor and there is a very large group of students in the Huon schools who are "at risk" in terms of basic literacy and numeracy skills.

The magnitude of this "at risk" group provides cause for real concern. It is disturbing to think that one in three of the 14 year olds tested in 1976 could be described as functionally illiterate and that more than half were unable to cope with very basic number skills. Many of these 14 year olds will now be out of the school system, but the large group of "at risk" 10 year olds identified late in 1976 will still be at school. Obviously one of the most pressing needs in the Huon schools is to provide remediation for low performing students and to aim for their early identification.

The problem of raising the level of participation in schooling is a more complex one. Undoubtedly one of the most important factors influencing the retention of students to Year 11 is the lack of post-secondary facilities in the Huon area. However, this does not provide a completely convincing explanation for the fact that the rate of retention is so low since access to the Secondary Colleges in Hobart is relatively straight-forward, even for students living farther away than Huonville. Nor of course, does it explain why retention to Year 10 is lower in the Huon than in the urban regions of the study. Almost inevitably, it must be concluded that raising the level of student retention in the Huon and in other country areas, requires changes in attitudes among parents, students and the general community and there are no short-term measures which will bring about these changes.

The overall effect of the discussion of educational outcomes in the Huon has been to confirm that rural students are at a disadvantage compared with urban students. But it is not enough to dismiss the low outcomes of Huon schools as part of the urban/rural syndrome and simply to provide administrative solutions, such as remedial teachers, to cope with the problems. It is important that those involved in the education of country children should attempt to determine why they are disadvantaged, as well as how to deal with the evidence of disadvantage.

7. FROM SCHOOL TO WORK FOR HUON STUDENTS

A major focus of this study is on educational outcomes and the experience of Huon students after they have completed formal schooling. This section looks closely at the experience of the 1976 leavers over the months following school leaving and entry into the work force. It also examines the longer-term experience of three groups of leavers (1973, 1975, 1976) and possible implications of observed patterns.

Two field officers in the study team followed-up students who left Huon schools in the years 1973, 1975, 1965 in order to :-

- gauge student aspirations prior to leaving school and then compare these with the occupations which students actually entered;
- look into the vocational guidance offered in Huon schools and assess its relevance, both in the eyes of the students and in relation to local and other employment opportunities;
- compare occupations entered with the educational levels and grades which had been attained; school attended, and place of residence; and
- study local job opportunities and possible patterns of future employment in the valley.

7.1 Methodology and background characteristics

With the cooperation of secondary schools in the area, comprehensive lists were obtained of students leaving in 1973, 1975 and 1976. Of the 609 students who left Huon schools in these three years, 451 had attended Huonville High School, 61 St. James and the remaining 97 the three district schools in the area.[1]

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[1] See Table 30 Appendix 5.

During the latter months of 1976 information was gathered on the present occupations of the 1973 and 1975 leavers. Some of this was obtained from school sources but much was the result of personal contact by field officers in the study team. As the 1976 leavers were still at school at this stage, they were contacted to discuss their future aspirations, experience of vocational guidance and general feelings about schooling and transition to work. Following the completion of the school year, the 1976 leavers were regularly followed up till the end of March, 1977 by which time most had employment or had continued on to Higher School Certificate study in Hobart. Where possible, those still unemployed at the beginning of the 1977 school year were personally interviewed, but the number of such cases was small and conclusions were impressionistic. A comprehensive analysis of information, including computer processing, was undertaken. In addition, some general information was gained from a Search Conference held at Franklin,[2] attended by a representative group of approximately 40 local residents.

Educational background

During the three years studied, 158 of the 609 students travelled to the Huonville High School from areas served by district schools. Of these, 115 were studying subjects at levels available to them at their local district school.

Apparently, many parents feel a high school education is preferable to that offered by the district schools. For example, a Geeveston mother commented "while the present employment situation continues, a certificate from the high school holds much more weight, so parents will try to send their children there".

In view of this attitude, the destinations of students were examined to see if students entering the workforce benefited from enrolling at the High School. The numbers

[2] See conference notes in Appendix 1.

Table 7.1

Home address and school attended

School	Home address (Local Government Area)			
	Huonville	Cygnet	Geeveston	Dover
Huonville High	287	51	72	35
Cygnet District	0	27	0	0
Geeveston District	1	0	37	1
Dover District	0	0	0	25
St. James College	1	45	4	0
Total	299	123	113	61

* The small number of leavers not included in this table are made up of those with home addresses outside the valley or imprecisely stated.

Table 7.2

School attended and present occupation

Present occupation	School attended					
	Huon-ville	St. James	Cygnet	Geeve-ston	Dover	Total
Further education	15.6%	7.1%	0	0	0	12.3%
Armed Forces	2.0%	0	0	0	0	1.5%
Apprenticeships, Technical College	21.9%	33.9%	12.0%	13.9%	22.7%	22.2%
Clerical	20.6%	26.8%	16.0%	0	9.1%	19.2%
Semi-skilled, unskilled	24.6%	19.7%	40.0%	47.2%	50.0%	27.4%
On family farm	2.5%	0	4.0%	2.8%	0	2.2%
Unemployed	12.6%	12.5%	28.0%	36.1%	18.2%	15.1%
Total	100% N-397	100% N-56	100% N-25	100% N-36	100% N-22	100% N-536

involved and some lack of information on courses attempted made firm conclusions difficult. However, the controlling factor appears to be the ability of the student and the course he/she undertakes rather than the type of school attended.

From a breakdown of present occupations, it can be stated that no district school students continued to Higher School Certificate study during this period, nor did they enter the Armed Forces; also, a proportionately higher number of unemployed are from the district schools. On the other hand, district school leavers have obtained both apprenticeships and clerical positions, so district school education does not eliminate the possibility of acquiring skilled occupations. Level I students and early school leavers are the group most likely to remain in their local district school and subsequently, most likely to be unemployed. Therefore, comparative figures can give a misleading impression of a connection between district school education and unemployment. However, the above table does highlight differences in the atmosphere within the high school and the district schools, with at least 68 per cent of students in the district schools leaving to enter unskilled occupations or unemployment and the remainder following a very limited range of occupations. By comparison, only 37.2 per cent of the high school students fell into this category with the valance fairly evenly spread between various skilled occupations and further education.

A significant feature of course level distribution was the disproportionately high number of Level I students (and inversely low number of Level III students) in the far southern section of the valley. This applied regardless of school attended and cannot be accurately explained, merely

mentioned in conjunction with the greater isolation and greater prevalence of unskilled occupations among parents in that area.

Table 7.3

Course levels and home address (row percentages)

Home address (Local Government Area)	Course level			Total 100%
	Level I %	Level II %	Level III %	
Huonville area	23.7	55.1	21.3	(N-296)
Cygnet area	22.0	55.3	22.8	(N-123)
Geeveston area	21.3	57.5	21.2	(N-113)
Dover and south	44.3	45.9	9.8	(N-61)

Educational Changes

The number of Year 6 district school students remaining in their district school for the secondary years remained fairly static for the three years studied, but only averaged 34 per cent of the total. There has been a definite decrease in students leaving school before completing Year 10, a trend particularly noticeable in district schools. This is likely to be associated with both the present employment situation and an increased emphasis on the need for extended schooling. In 1973 a small number of students left in Year 7 and 8 and a further 20 per cent in Year 9. By 1976 no students left before Year 9 and only 13 per cent left without completing Year 10.

In the period 1973-1976 the proportion of students undertaking courses at different levels has fluctuated considerably. Generally there seems to have been a small increase in the proportion of students undertaking Level I courses or leaving school with no award and a balancing reduction in the number of Level II students. The proportion taking the highest level courses, leading to further education and the widest choice of employment, has not increased.

Table 7.4
Years of schooling completed

Schooling completed	1973		1975		1976		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Year 10	147	76.6	160	77.3	177	86.8	484	80.3
Year 9	38	19.8	44	21.3	27	13.2	109	18.0
Year 8	4	2.1	3	1.4	-		7	1.2
Year 7	3	1.5	-		-		3	.5
Total	192	100%	207	100%	204	100%	603	100%

Table 7.5
Course levels studied

Course level	1973		1975		1976		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Level I and no award	44	22.7	51	24.5	56	27.4	151	24.9
Level II	113	58.2	122	58.7	94	46.1	329	54.3
Level III	37	19.1	35	16.8	54	26.5	126	20.8
Total	194	100%	208	100%	204	100%	606	100%

7.2 Destinations

7.21 The initial period of job search among 1976 leavers

Several 1976 leavers had obtained jobs prior to finishing school, but many did not enter the workforce till school returned the following year, as can be seen from the progressive table below. Apart from a continued search for work by some, the table also reflects changes in attitude occurring during the long holiday. The number intending to continue to Higher School Certificate studies dropped, while those returning to school for improved results increased (possibly as a result of being unable to find work). The figures also show a number of students entering seasonal

employment, which probably means a return to the ranks of the unemployed by May, following completion of the fruit picking season. A comparison between these March figures and previously gathered figures for 1973 and 1975 leavers establishes a work pattern for the period but must be seen in the light of the seasonal employment and less settled nature of the 1976 leavers.

Table 7.6

The initial period of job search among 1976 leavers

Destination of 1976 leavers	January 1977	February 1977	March 1977
Entered Labour Force			
Employed - Apprenticeships	35	44	48
Other permanent employment	41	61	64
Seasonal employment	6	7	18
Total employed	82	112	130
Unemployed	79	45	27
Total entering labour force	161	157	157
Not in labour force			
Full time H.S.C. study	41	36	34
Secretarial course	3	3	3
*Returned to school	2	8	8
Others not in labour force (supporting mothers, invalids)	1	3	5
Left area/destination unknown/incomplete information	7	8	8
Total	215	215	215

*This category has been included in this table for interest, but has been withdrawn from all other calculations as these students became 1977 leavers.

7.22 Labour force status for 1973, 1975 and 1976 leavers

The change in distribution of course levels (see p. 118) seems to be reflected in the types of occupation entered into by school leavers in the three years examined. As shown in Table 7.7, the number of lower-status white-collar jobs (e.g. clerical workers, shop assistants) has dropped, whereas the number entering unskilled work has increased considerably. One explanation for the changed percentages among unskilled and unemployed in the 1975 and 1976 leavers may be that a number of leavers are only able to find seasonal employment and subsequently become unemployed (see p. 121). A further reason for the high unemployment rate among 1975 leavers may be the later date at which 1976 information was gathered. The figures may reflect an improvement in the job situation but may alternatively mean that 1976 leavers have been able to obtain work ahead of those who had left school a year earlier but were unemployed. Fewer of the 1975 leavers were in apprenticeships : only 13.5 per cent had entered a trade in comparison with 22 per cent and 23 per cent in the other groups of leavers. This is not consistent with the Tasmanian figures where there is little difference between the percentage of Year 10 students entering apprenticeships during the years in question.[3]

Figures for the 1973 leavers cannot be successfully used for comparative purposes as many of them have had time to complete further education studies and are generally more likely to be established in long-term positions.

7.23 Continuing education

Two major facts emerge from information regarding continuing education - (i) retention rates for Huon school leavers are well below the state average (see table on p. 98)

[3]Information obtained from the Apprenticeship Commission of Tasmania and based on figures provided for 1974, 1976 and 1977.

Table 7.7

Comparison of school leavers' present occupations

Destination of school leavers	1973		1975		1976	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Entered Labour Force						
Employed - •clerical, armed services;	44	22.7	43	20.7	24	11.6
•skilled, apprentices;	43	22.2	28	13.5	48	23.2
•shop assistants, other semi-skilled;	40	20.6	37	17.8	25	12.1
•unskilled.	9	4.6	16	7.7	33	15.9
Total	136	70.1	124	59.6	130	62.8
Unemployed	16	8.2	38	18.3	27	13.0
TOTAL in labour force	152		162		157	
Not in Labour Force						
Full time study	9	4.6	26	12.5	37	17.9
Other	10	5.2	12	5.8	5	2.4
TOTAL not in labour force	19	9.8	38	18.3	42	20.3
Left area/job unknown	23	11.9	8	3.85	8	3.9
TOTAL	194	100%	208	100%	207	100%

and (ii) all students continuing to Higher School Certificate studies came from Huonville High School or St. James College. While this result supports other findings that retention rates are lower in rural areas [4] it does not give any true indication of reasons. One possibility may be a low level of parental aspirations (referred to in section 7.4). Several parents interviewed saw Year 10 as the end of formal education and were content to persuade their children to continue to that stage in order to secure a job. Of the 23 leavers from 1975 who continued to Year 11, five had dropped out by the end of the year and did not return in 1977, further reducing the number likely to enter further education or a career. From the 1973 leavers, only nine (4.7 per cent) are still involved in continued full-time education. Although this percentage

[4] Committee on Secondary Education, Secondary Education in Tasmania, (Hobart: Education Department of Tasmania, 1977), p. 53.

is similar to retention rates for other rural communities it is considerably lower than national rates.

Detailed information on the family background of the 1976 leavers who continued to Year 11 was not obtained, but from the 22 parental occupations known, 18 were in professional or skilled positions and only four were in unskilled jobs. This limited evidence may support the suggestion that the school's influence is relatively small compared with that of the home. Harris, Rooth and Smolicz also observe that, "indifferent parental attitudes to further education and low educational and occupational aspirations of parents and children both lead to a wastage of talent in rural regions."[5]

7.24 Distribution of apprenticeships

During the period studied, 118 students (19.4 per cent of leavers) entered apprenticeships and some of these have now qualified as tradesmen. In this particular category, students leaving school at the end of Year 9 are greatly disadvantaged, with only 10 Year 9 leavers obtaining an apprenticeship during the three years in question. Course levels also appear to be significant as only 13 (9 per cent) Level I students entered a trade during the three years compared with 83 (25 per cent) Level II and 21 (17 per cent) Level III students. This probably accounts for the district schools' poor representation in this group, as a majority of Level II students who lived in the areas served by district schools attended the high school. From personal interviews students seeking apprenticeships felt that most employers were only interested in applicants with at least a School Certificate Level II pass in mathematics, although theoretically this is the requirement for only a very small number of trades.[6]

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[5] R. McL. Harris, J.S. Rooth, J.J. Smolicz, Isolation and Education, (n.p. : South Australian Education Department Research Publication, n.d.), p. 51.

[6] Information provided by the Apprenticeship Commission of Tasmania.

Table 7.8

Distribution of apprentices

School/Grade/Course Level	Number of apprentices	% of all Huon Valley apprentices (100%-118)	% of leavers	Number of leavers
School attended				
Huonville High	88	74.6	19.5	451
St. James	20	16.9	32.8	61
District schools	10	8.5	10.3	97
Year left				
Year 9	11	9.3	10.1	109
Year 10	107	90.7	22.1	484
Course levels				
Level I/No award	14	11.9	9.3	151
Level II	83	70.3	25.2	329
Level III	21	17.8	16.7	126

For this reason, two of the 1976 leavers have returned to school this year to improve their mathematics level. Several local people expressed concern at this criteria for selecting apprentices and supported a suggestion made at the group discussion held at Franklin[7] - that, on leaving school, graded certificates be replaced with character and aptitude references from staff members. They believe this would be a truer indication of a student's aptitude for a trade and likely continued interest. The reason given for this suggestion was that under the present system many academically bright students with no particular future in mind are obtaining apprenticeships to the detriment of practically-competent students who are desperately keen to enter a trade but have proved to be less able achievers in the school system. However, the findings of this study do not substantiate this as only 21 Level III students

[7]See Appendix 1.

entered a trade during the whole three years. Another point raised at the Search Conference was the need for a new Technical College south of Hobart.[8] Twenty-nine of the apprentices are working in the Huon but have to travel to Technical College in Hobart and another 34, although working in the city, are still living at home.

Table 7.9

Apprentices' job locations and travel arrangements

Area of job location/ Boarding or living at home	Number of apprentices	% of all Huon Valley apprentices (100% - 114)
Huon	21	18.4
Cygnet	2	1.7
Esperance	6	5.3
Hobart	85	74.6
Boarding	51	44.7
Living at home	63	55.3

When home address is taken into account, the three municipalities are proportionately fairly evenly represented among the apprentices.

Table 7.10

Home address of apprentices by municipality

Home address of apprentices	Number of apprentices	% of all leavers from municipality
Huon	60	19.0
Cygnet	27	21.9
Esperance	29	18.5

[8] Compare recommendation 6 on p. 164 below.

7.25 Secretarial and clerical occupations

This category includes typists, bank clerks and all other forms of office workers. As with the two previous categories, this group is disproportionately dominated by high school and St. James leavers. District school representation is very low and, in fact, no Geeveston District School leavers obtained jobs in this category in any of the years examined. Again, leavers living in the Esperance Municipality were under represented in this occupational group - possibly because of the lack of local job opportunities and the greater distance from possible Hobart occupations.

Table 7.11

Distribution of secretarial and clerical entrants

Clerical Workers - School, Address, Job Location	Number of Leavers	% of all Huon Valley entrants to clerical positions (100% - 103)
School		
Huonville High	82	80%
St. James	15	15%
Cygnet District	4	4%
Geeveston District	0	-
Dover District	2	2%
Home address by munic.		
Huon	55	53%
Cygnet	26	25%
Esperance	22	21%
Job location by munic.		
Huon	10	10%
Cygnet	5	5%
Esperance	3	3%
Hobart	82	82%

7.26 Semi-skilled and unskilled workers

This group includes builders' labourers, factory workers, nurses' aides, and shop assistants. These positions share the common disadvantages of being relatively low in levels of work-skills and of entrants having little likelihood of training or promotion. All three district schools are over-represented in comparison with Huonville High School and St. James College. Since this category is dominated by Level I students, most of whom remain in their local district school, such a result is not surprising. The only exception was in the shop assistant group, which came predominantly from Huonville High and Geeveston District, where the two main shopping centres are located. Again, early school leavers were over-represented in this category.

Table 7.12

Type of occupation and home address

Home Address	Type of Occupation						
	*1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Grove/Lucaston	6	14	8	15	1	12	56
Huonville/Ranelagh	20	35	32	34	4	11	136
Glen Huon/Judbury	3	7	7	13	1	5	36
Cygnet	6	29	26	27	1	21	110
Franklin/Castle Forbes Bay	9	12	12	10	2	9	54
Geeveston	15	22	10	23	3	16	89
Dover/Southport	3	10	8	24	-	6	51
Total	62	129	103	146	12	80	532

*1. Further Education.
2. Apprentices, Tradesmen, Armed Forces.
3. Clerical.
4. Semi-Unskilled
5. Family Farms
6. Unemployed.

A large number of unskilled workers come from the southern section of the Esperance Municipality, as discussed in the section on local employment. Although no specific

relationship between parental and school leaver occupations could be determined, the survey of parents did indicate a similar concentration of unskilled workers in the extreme south of the Valley, particularly among the fathers surveyed. Students working on family farms were not included as, in most cases, continuous training is taking place with a view to ultimate farm management.

7.27 Unemployed

At the end of March 1977, 13.3 per cent of the 1973, 1975 and 1976 leavers were unemployed, which is considerably higher than the percentage out of work among the parents surveyed, reflecting the undue concentration of 15-19 year olds among the unemployed. Unlike some country employment figures which show a significantly higher number of females out of work in this age group, distribution in the Huon group was fairly even. Leavers from the Geeveston District School were more likely to be unemployed than leavers from other schools, with a third of its leavers unemployed at the beginning of 1977. Both the high school and St. James were under-represented in this category and the fishing industry in the Dover-Southport area seems to have absorbed many of that district's likely unemployed, resulting in only four of Dover District School leavers being out of work.

The following table shows the unemployed group to be drawn very heavily from early school leavers (28 per cent of the Year 8 and Year 9 leavers are unemployed compared with nine per cent of the Year 10 leavers). Students who had followed lower course-levels are disproportionately represented too, with 26 per cent of the Level I and no award students unemployed compared with 12 per cent of Level II and only two per cent of the Level III students.

Table 7.13

Distribution of unemployed school leavers

Sex/School/Year/ Course level.	Number	% of total category	Total number (100%)
Male	37	12.7	292
Female	44	13.9	317
School attended			
Huonville High	50	11.1	451
St. James	7	11.5	61
Cygnet District	7	23.3	30
Geeveston District	13	33.3	39
Dover District	4	14.3	28
Schooling completed			
Years 7, 8	2	20.0	10
Year 9	34	31.2	109
Year 10	45	9.3	484
Course level			
Level I, no award	40	26.5	151
Level II	39	11.8	329
Level III	2	1.6	126

In a breakdown of these figures by place of residence, the Cygnet municipality had by far the highest proportion of unemployed, possibly due to the lack of unskilled work available in that municipality. When other leavers not in the work force (e.g. supporting mothers, invalid pensioners) are added, the Cygnet proportion rises even more dramatically, with more than half of the unemployed residing in Cygnet.

Many 1976 leavers did not actively seek work till the end of January which made figures at the beginning of the year look very high. Temporary jobs during the apple season have caused a reduction in the number of unemployed but this may rise in June with the completion of temporary work.

7.3 Location of opportunities for school-leavers

As would be expected from comments on the economy and demography of the Valley in Section 4 of this report, only a limited amount of local work is available for school leavers and most of this is of an unskilled nature. It would appear that the number of Huon Valley based jobs increased slightly in 1976, although the numbers are too small to state this trend with great confidence. There may have been a marginal improvement in the economic situation in the northern section of the valley, but it may also be linked with the increase in labouring jobs as opposed to shop and office work. An alternative explanation is that some leavers who started in the local workforce find positions in Hobart after gaining some experience in the labour force and a greater degree of independence.

Table 7.14

Job location of school leavers by municipality

Job location	1973		1975		1976		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Huon	23	17.8	26	19.7	36	28.1	85	21.8
Cygnet	8	6.2	11	8.3	3	2.3	22	5.7
Esperance	13	10.6	8	6.1	23	18.0	44	11.3
Total Huon	44	34.1	45	34.1	62	48.4	151	38.8
Hobart	85	65.9	87	65.9	66	51.6	238	61.2
Total	129	100%	132	100%	128	100%	389	100%

One of the most important findings of the survey is that three-fifths of school-leavers from the Huon Valley have had to find work in Hobart. Due to the proximity of the city many are able to travel to work daily but the limited number and restricted range of opportunities for young people in this country area gives cause for serious concern.

A very high percentage of those entering a trade or secretarial and clerical positions are employed in Hobart; whereas Hobart employment accounts for only a little over half of the shop assistants and an even smaller number of the other unskilled workers.

Table 7.15

Type of occupation and job location (row percentages)

Present Occupation	Job location by municipality					
	Huon	Cygnet	Esperance	Total Huon	Hobart	Total 100%
Apprentices/ trades	19.3%	1.8%	4.6%	25.7%	74.3%	N-109
Secretarial/ clerical	10.0%	5.0%	3.0%	18.0%	82.0%	N-100
Shop assistants	26.2%	3.3%	11.5%	41.0%	59.0%	N-61
Other unskilled	39.7%	11.5%	24.4%	75.6%	24.4%	N-78
Family farm	81.8%	- -	18.2%	100.0%	- -	N-11
Total all occupations	24.2% N-87	5.0% N-18	10.0% N-36	39.3% N-141	60.7% N-218	359

Since the majority of those in skilled occupations or further education must travel to or board in Hobart, a high percentage of the valley's academically bright young people are engaged for long periods of time away from their local area. Although only 34 per cent of the total number of leavers are boarding, those engaged in daily travel also seem to acquire new interests and friendships in the city and have a declining amount of interest or time to spend locally. Comments from a couple of the 1975 leavers support this - "I like living in the Huon but there's nothing to do here" "I'd rather spend my leisure time in town, there's more to do". This rural-urban migration has

has been commented on by other writers[9] and must be assumed to be a continuing process in the present economic climate. Such a 'brain drain' may be responsible for a shortage of potential youth leaders and lack of continued enthusiasm for improved local facilities for youth recreation, causing more young people to look beyond the valley for leisure time activities. "The siphoning of the most active elements from the rural community as a totality upsets the equilibrium of that community".[10] However, there are still a greater number of ex-students (particularly males) travelling from home than boarding, even amongst those who have been in the workforce for three years.

Table 7.16

Living at home or boarding

Whether boarding or living at home	1973		1975		1976		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Boarding	69	35.6	66	31.7	62	30.0	197	32.3
Living at home	108	55.3	134	64.4	140	67.6	382	62.7
Not Known	17	8.7	8	3.9	5	2.4	30	5.9
Total	194	100%	208	100%	207	100%	609	100%

[9]See for example, Neville Behrens, "Schooling and Work: a study of twenty-three year olds in Tasmanian urban and rural communities," in School, Community and Work: urban and rural aspects commissioned by the Australian Government Commission of Inquiry into Poverty (Canberra: A.G.P.S., 1978), pp. 39-42. and
Peter W. Salmon and Ruth E. Weston, Human Adjustment in Rural Towns, (Melbourne: School of Agriculture and Forestry, University of Melbourne, 1974) p.4.

[10]Isolation and Education, p.3.

7.31 Local employment

Huon Municipality

Possibilities for local employment are brightest in the Huon municipality. Twenty-one of the 316 Huon leavers were able to obtain local apprenticeships - probably due to the fact that this municipality acts as the service centre for the whole valley and, because of its location, is starting to be developed as a dormitory suburb of Hobart. There were also 10 clerical positions (mostly in banks) and 16 shop assistants employed locally. Thus, although this municipality has also been affected by the depressed apple industry, it has been able to offer varying kinds of employment to 87 of its school leavers. However, while acknowledging that this municipality has more to offer the school leaver than Esperance or Port Cygnet, there are still 131 Huon school leavers working in Hobart and 53 unemployed.

Esperance Municipality

Most of the available work in the southern section of the Valley relates to the fishing and timber industries. Consequently, of the 39 leavers employed in that municipality, only 11 are girls, mostly employed as shop assistants. Apart from five apprentices and three bank clerks, all occupations are unskilled and several are only temporary (for the apple season) with little likelihood of continued employment after the end of May. In terms of the availability of unskilled employment, Esperance residents are probably better off than their Cygnet counterparts, but for high-status occupations or further education they are at a distinct disadvantage as travel is virtually impossible, due to the time and cost involved. Thus boarding away from home becomes a necessity. If this situation is unacceptable to the student or his/her family (as shown by one mother's comment "(he) is too young to be in the city on his own"), then unemployment often becomes the only alternative. At the beginning of 1977, 22 of the 157 Esperance leavers were unemployed and this number may

increasedslightly at the end of the apple season.

Port Cygnet Municipality

There appear to be fewer local job opportunities in this municipality than in Esperance, with only 18 of the 123 school leavers employed locally. With no fishing or timber industry to sustain it, the municipality is reliant on service facilities and a declining fruit industry. The last couple of years have seen the introduction of a grape-growing and wine-producing concern to the area, but at this stage only a small number of unskilled job opportunities are available and surrounding farmers are still showing reluctance towards growing a new, unknown product. This industry could become a viable proposition for the area and, with the recent introduction of fruit wines, could absorb a proportion of local rural production. However, from an employment viewpoint, it would appear to offer only a limited number of unskilled jobs on a short-term basis and, in the long term, even fewer career-type jobs (e.g. in the wine blending area). Early in 1977 the vineyard employed six full-time and two part-time staff (all local) but future staffing needs are hard to predict.

The main alternatives for Cygnet school-leavers seeking employment are travelling long distances to Hobart daily or boarding away from home. Those with lower academic qualifications and those unable to cope with the additional stress of long travel or separation from family, are, in most cases, unable to find employment, accounting for the high number of unemployed leavers in Cygnet.

7.4 Interviews of 1976 students

7.41 Aspirations

In November, 1976 final-year students at Cygnet District School and St. James College were interviewed about their future aspirations and their feelings on vocational guidance in school. Similar information was obtained from Year 10 students at the High School while the

staff at Geeveston and Dover District Schools provided the relevant information for their final-year students. These school leavers were then followed up at the beginning of 1977 and those having difficulties obtaining work were contacted again in February or March.

A majority of students knew what they wanted to do when interviewed at the end of 1976, though aspirations generally were restricted in range and not very high, as found with other country children.[11] Most wanted apprenticeships, office jobs or shop work but had no long-term career plans. Very few apprenticeship seekers knew specifically what they wanted to do, merely that they wanted a trade. Among those continuing to Year 11 several were doing so to fill in time while looking for work. Students in the Year 9 and 10 age-group appear to be very conscious of peer group reactions and a feeling against continued education, started by a few, can soon spread. When asked why he or she was not continuing to Higher School Certificate level, a typical reply was "none of my friends are", or "I'd rather get a job like my mates so I can buy a car". Some strength of character or definite sense of purpose is then required to support a continuation to Higher School Certificate studies. In areas where a majority of parents have Higher School Certificate or tertiary qualifications a continuation to these levels becomes the expected norm for children and pressures are reversed. Another obvious factor is the cost and other travel problems associated with continuing education in Hobart. Distance is a major problem for those living south of Franklin as there is no bus service available for secondary college students and boarding therefore becomes

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[11] See for example, J.A. Fyfield, "Rural-Metropolitan Aspects", in Rights and Inequality in Education, ed. Peter J. Fensham (Melbourne : Cheshire Publishing, 1970), p. 91.
B. McGaw et al, "Prospects for School-leavers", in School Leavers: Choice and Opportunity commissioned by the Australian Government Commission of Inquiry into Poverty (Canberra : A.G.P.S., 1977), p. 88.

essential. However, although this may be a restricting factor, it was not a problem raised by the 1976 leavers or their parents when interviewed and, from the responses given by Huonville High Year 10 students, only one student not continuing said she might do so if facilities were available locally.

Seventy per cent of 1976 leavers were able (by the end of March) to obtain the kind of employment they had wanted prior to leaving school. Among those whose aspirations were not fulfilled were a fairly high number (24 boys and three girls) who had unsuccessfully sought apprenticeships. Most had subsequently obtained employment (mainly unskilled), but eight were still unemployed at the end of March. At least one of these had been dissuaded by his parents from applying for other forms of employment as they felt the opportunity to enter an apprenticeship might then be missed. All the unsuccessful applicants were Level I and II students and only one Level I student obtained an apprenticeship (as a trainee baker with a local firm). The balance of those unable to follow the occupation of their choice included a small number of girls wanting office work who eventually became shop assistants, and, among those still unemployed, four who had no aspirations prior to leaving school.

As the survey of parental occupations was anonymous, it was not possible to link these occupations with individual school leavers and the bearing of this factor on a student's aspirations could not be established. It should be noted, however, that a considerable number of leavers resident in the southern sector of the valley (Dover and south, see Table 7.12), obtained unskilled jobs, paralleling the distribution of parental occupations in that area.[12]

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[12]See section on Employment, Table 4.7 above.

The subject of parental attitudes to the ambitions their children have about further education or different types of occupation emerges as a subject worthy of further investigation. One factor which may influence parental attitudes to education is the parents' isolation from the education system due to the lack of local opportunity for continuing education. This lack of access to further education was also raised at the Franklin Search Conference. Until 1977, no local technical studies were available for people beyond school age and the very limited and spasmodic adult education courses (rarely utilising school facilities) were dependent on an individual's ability to enthuse a large enough group and find a tutor. Some technical courses were introduced at the high school in 1977 and there has been a good response from the community.

Another area for possible parental involvement, after school activities, is also restricted due to the large number of children transported home by bus. In addition the distances involved also reduce the likelihood of parents physically calling at the school with minor queries or for spontaneous discussions with staff.

7.42 Vocational Guidance

Dr. Don Edgar has suggested that, "the range of (rural youths') experience is narrower, the roles available to play at are severely circumscribed and the future selves that can be imagined are, as a result, relatively few".[13] Similar feelings have also been expressed by other writers. Fyfield, for example, refers to the following quotation from a principal "It is pretty clear, I think, that a child in a metropolitan school is likely to meet other children whose parents follow many different occupations. In contrast, in the average country town or rural area the range

[13] Don Edgar, The Schools Commission and Rural Disadvantage, Paper No. 33 (Melbourne: La Trobe University, 1975), p.11.

of occupations is much more limited and hence the child does not learn so much about them".[14] In this study the limited range of occupations referred to by students interviewed and the lack of definition (e.g. "I want an apprenticeship","I want a job doing office work"), may be due to restricted knowledge of job possibilities.

Although a majority of those interviewed said they felt reasonably happy with the vocational guidance they had received, many listed parents, friends and teachers as the main areas of help and, when asked what additional guidance they would like to see, recurring answers were "an additional trained Commonwealth Employment Service (C.E.S.) officer in the Huon" and "visits from Hobart firms and matrics. to tell us what subjects and work areas are available". Several students had found the C.E.S. officer very helpful, but the fact that he was based in town restricting easy, direct access was a disadvantage. Each school had had at least one visit from the C.E.S. and the Army, and some students had also paid a brief visit to the Careers Centre. However, from the students' viewpoint, the scope of the C.E.S. visits had apparently been limited to discussion of jobs suggested by the students and the Career Centre visits were too short to allow them to follow through a variety of ideas. Also according to the students, vocational guidance is not discussed in any depth until Year 10, by which time important choices about courses of study have already been made. Generally speaking, the high school students appear to have greater access to outside vocational information and usually have a Guidance Officer based at the High School to whom they can refer. However, the district school student has the advantage of being able to discuss matters on a one-to-one basis more easily with his or her classroom teacher. A common comment

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[14] Fyfield, Rights and Inequality in Education, p.91.

from district school students was that teachers did not offer help soon enough -"vocational guidance seemed to be a last minute thing". Decisions regarding the student's destination after school appear to rely very heavily on the child and his or her family and must, therefore, be dependent on their knowledge of possible careers. A survey of parental occupations in Huon schools[15] showed that only 4.6 per cent of fathers had professional occupations, and almost half of these were teachers. Since teachers also accounted for 43 of the 48 professional mothers in this survey, this only leaves a total of 34 other professional parents scattered among the Huon schools, in a limited range of occupations. Some writers suggest that rural students continuing to tertiary education predominantly enter the teaching profession as studentships are available in this field.[16] However, from the above evidence, it may well be that teaching is chosen because it is one of the few professions about which rural children have any knowledge.

In the parental survey, farmers accounted for 17.3 per cent of the fathers surveyed but, in the present rural economic climate, farming is unlikely to offer a vocational goal for school leavers, as reflected in the fact that less than two per cent of the total school leavers surveyed have remained to work on family farms and only nine per cent are employed in any rural occupations. This corresponds to one of the findings of the Poverty Inquiry survey of 1500 young Tasmanians that there has been a dramatic reduction from one generation to the next in the number of males who were farmers or farm workers.[17] In the

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[15] See above section 4.3 Employment.

[16] See for example, Fyfield, Rights and Inequality in Education, p.92.
Edgar, The Schools Commission and Rural Disadvantage, p.11

[17] Behrens, Schooling and Work, p. 29.

Huon the majority of working fathers are employed in unskilled jobs so that information on possible careers would appear to be dependent on influences from outside the school. The Higher School Certificate students interviewed all felt that vocational guidance was sufficient for those interested enough to ask, a situation which probably puts the less able and unsure student at a distinct disadvantage. Several leavers, both employed and unemployed, said they would like to have had a work experience programme of some sort in Year 10. As one unsuccessful apprenticeship-seeker said - "(a work experience programme) would give students a chance to find out exactly what they want to do, give them more confidence to apply for jobs and improve feelings between employers and possible employees". Lack of contact with a variety of actual job situations seems to be a hazard of rural life.

7.5 Summary

This section has examined the transition period between school and initial employment for secondary students in the Huon Valley during three separate years, and can be summarised as follows.

The aspirations of final year (Year 10) students were generally restricted, as has been found with other rural communities both in Australia and overseas. School leavers' occupations relate in distribution fairly closely to parental occupations in the Huon so that there is a limited range of occupations to provide students with first-hand knowledge. This is particularly noticeable in the far southern section of the valley where a high percentage of school leavers and fathers work in unskilled occupations. A disproportionately high number of Level I students and low number of Level III students (regardless of school attended) also come from this area. Stronger emphasis on vocational guidance at an earlier stage of schooling than at present was suggested and it would appear that the present level of vocational guidance may be insufficient for rural students.

Many parents have shown their preference for a high school education although resultant outcomes appear to be dependant on the student's ability and course levels studied rather than school attended.

Early school-leavers and Level I students appear to be disadvantaged when entering the labour force and are over-represented in the unemployed group. However, a definite decrease in early school-leavers has taken place during the period studied, particularly among district school students.

An alteration in the proportion studying particular course levels has also occurred during this period, with an increase in the number of students studying subjects at both Level I and Level III. A similar situation is noticeable in labour force status from 1973 and 1976 with a decrease in the number of semi-skilled workers and an increase in unskilled workers and those entering apprenticeships or further education. However, without knowledge of 1974 leavers' destinations it is hard to establish a true "pattern", and these findings may be merely coincidental to a particular year.

A majority of school leavers have to travel to Hobart for employment although, even after three years in the work force, more than half the 1973 leavers are still living at home in the valley. Local employment is showing slight signs of improvement, which may continue due to increased residential development in the north and fishing prospects in the south. However, rural activity seems to be fairly stagnant, having a particularly damaging effect on the Cygnet area where there is little in the way of alternative industry.

8. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

8.1 Explaining educational inequalities.

In recent years a number of studies have investigated the extent and the nature of the unequal participation by country students in schooling and the reduced chances in life that result. The Tasmanian study for the Poverty Inquiry that traced 1500 Tasmanians over a fifteen-year period irdicated that country students did not stay on at school as long as city students and that their entry to post-secondary education was considerably diminished.[1] It revealed a disturbingly high level of migration of young people from country communities to cities. The surveys into literacy and numeracy in Tasmania conducted by Blazely reveal that country students do not perform as well as city students in these basic areas of learning.[2] Country children are not able to enter stable and rewarding occupations and embark on careers to the same extent as city children.[3] They are less likely to attain high-status positions in Australian society.

One of the purposes of this study has been to examine these general conclusions about country children and their education more closely. By looking intensively at a single country region additional light is thrown on the extent to which country children are disadvantaged. But the Huon Study has also had a more general aim. It is

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[1]Neville Behrens, Schooling and Work: a study of twenty-three year-olds in Tasmanian urban and rural communities (Hobart: Education Department of Tasmania, 1975), pp. 38-39, 53-54; Commission of Inquiry into Poverty, Fifth Main Report, Poverty and Education in Australia. Commissioner: R.T. Fitzgerald. (Canberra: A.G.P.S., 1976), p. 69.

[2]Lloyd D. Blazely, Survey of Basic Skills of Reading and Numeracy of 14 Year Old Tasmanian Students. Research Study No. 21. (Hobart: Education Department of Tasmania, 1976), pp. 7-8.

[3]See, for example, Poverty Inquiry, Poverty and Education, p.70.

not enough to gain information on the extent to which country children participate or fail to participate in education or to enter into rewarding work after leaving school. It is also necessary to ask why it is that these patterns are found. In the literature on this subject six different emphases can be identified:[4]

(i) an emphasis on the level of aspirations and expectations among parents, teachers and students;

(ii) an emphasis on the effects of an "urban-oriented status system" on students' sense of self and projected future (including the 'need-to-leave-home' syndrome);

(iii) an emphasis on a lower level of educational resource provision to country areas;

(iv) an emphasis on structural differences between educational provision in city and country areas (e.g. in the organization of schooling or the absence of upper secondary provisions);

(v) the connection between problems such as financial hardship, limited cultural experiences and restricted work horizons and the development of individuals who are competent and feel able to control their own lives;

(vi) an emphasis on the problems of "access" and "remoteness", including sensitivity to the differences between country areas in terms of distance, economic situation, provision of services, quality of teaching, and so on.

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[4]National Conference on Country Education, A Program for Research into Country Education in Australia (Hobart: Education Department of Tasmania, 1977), p.15.

Of these emphases or hypotheses attention in this study was focussed on the third, the level of resource provision in country areas. The conclusions of the study, as reported particularly in Chapter 5, are that differences in resource provision cannot be the explanation of the differences in educational attainment in the Huon as compared with other Tasmanian regions.[5] There is, of course, one very important qualification to this statement: the absence of post-Year 10 provisions within the Huon Valley. This is the subject of an important recommendation later in this Report but it seems unlikely to be crucial in explaining reduced educational outcomes within the existing educational institutions in the valley. The general conclusion remains valid that the State department is providing this area with as much in the way of resources, especially personnel, as other regions in the State.

The study has also shed light on two other emphases in the list indicated above: the existence of structural differences between city and country schools (item iv) and the problems of "access" (item vi). In the Tasmanian study for the Poverty Inquiry it was found that the structural division in Tasmanian education between city areas with a pattern of high schools and primary schools and country areas where children divide between high schools and district schools at the end of primary education was of considerable importance.[6] The present study of the Huon confirms that these differences are considerable, with children from district schools more likely to leave school early, be confined to unskilled jobs, and suffer unemployment. From this study, as from the Poverty Inquiry investigation, it has been concluded that an urgent need in the Tasmanian education system, is to build

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[5]See section 5.5.

[6]Behrens, Schooling and Work, p. 199, 201.

up district schools so that they can retain all the children from the local community and avoid the present highly undesirable separation into different types of schools on the basis of ability or parental aspirations.

The question of "access" takes on particular importance in relation to education beyond Year 10. In Tasmania, education at Year 11 and 12 level is confined to secondary colleges in the four largest urban centres. Even from an area as close to Hobart as Huonville, travelling is a considerable disincentive and the degree of participation in the later years of secondary education (Years 11 and 12) is less from the high schools in Huonville and other country towns in Tasmania than from urban high schools.[7] One of the unintended consequences of the Tasmanian policy of centralizing Higher School Certificate provisions seems to have been the disadvantaging of country students. The study leads to the conclusion that consideration should be given to the reversal of existing policy and to the provision of H.S.C. facilities in Tasmanian country towns. The present development of community colleges seems to provide a good base for such development. A facility that offered a limited range of H.S.C. subjects, some technical courses, including secretarial, and a range of further education options for adults would seem capable of development. This conclusion forms one of the major recommendations of the Huon study.

Notwithstanding the conclusions stated in the two previous paragraphs it is the overall conclusion of this

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[7]The following figures from the recent report of the Education Department of Tasmania. Committee on Secondary Education, Secondary Education in Tasmania (Hobart: Education Department of Tasmania, 1977) show the position: "34.3 per cent of entrants to metropolitan (Hobart) high schools entered secondary colleges in 1977; 25.5 per cent of entrants to high schools in other urban areas (Launceston, Burnie, Devonport) high schools did so; 18.5 per cent of entrants to high schools in country centres entered secondary colleges in 1977." (p. 73).

study that the reduced attainment of country students cannot be attributed to a reduced level or a different pattern of resource provision by educational authorities. The differences, or disadvantages, of country students lie more deeply embedded in the social context of country areas. From the work undertaken in one of the Huon communities by Tony Breen it can be suggested that differences in the level of aspirations and expectations among parents, teachers, and students is the most potent factor that is in operation.[8] The problem for the educational decision-maker is that such attitudes cannot be readily changed. It would be much easier to overcome differences if they could be attributed to an inadequate provision of resources. Differences in aspirations or expectations can only be overcome in the long-term and may even, as was suggested in the Poverty Inquiry study, require a changed attitude towards our country communities by the Australian society generally. In this report it was suggested that "as a nation we have permitted the gradual destruction of country communities and it is perhaps time that our society reappraised its attitude to them."[9] Action within schools cannot compensate for the decline of a rural community and the effect this has on opportunities for young people. Specifically, school leavers in the Huon will continue to face the difficult choices about the future arising from limited employment opportunities and the absence of locally-available further education.

Nevertheless, this Report does identify areas in which there is scope for immediate action. There is scope for direct intervention in the learning process, for example, by increasing the resources which schools have available for remedial education. Again, there is action which can be taken to assist parents to be more fully involved in

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[8] A.B. Breen, "Educational and Occupational Aspirations of Students at some Catholic Rural and Urban Secondary Schools in Tasmania," Research paper, School of Education, Latrobe University, November 1976. (Mimeographed).

[9] Behrens, Schooling and Work, p. 198.

their children's education and to have higher aspirations for their children. The Huon Study has led the research team to focus on action to foster a closer interaction between parents and schools.

8.2 Outline of suggested educational projects

As was indicated at the beginning of this report, the Huon Study has the particular objective of identifying specific projects that can be supported by the Country Education Program of the Schools Commission.[10] From the study and from the principals of schools in the area, acting as a study coordinating group, a large number of suggestions about projects have been generated. In order to consider these as Schools Commission projects four appropriate objectives have been developed :

(i) To increase the educational attainment of country students.

This includes the particular objective of increasing the educational participation of children from country families living in poverty.

(ii) To improve the school-work transition of country students, including assistance for unemployed young people.

(iii) To pilot and evaluate new methods of delivering educational services to country students.

(iv) To pilot and evaluate methods of bringing further education to country communities.

It is suggested that projects not capable of fulfilling one of these objectives should not be supported. These include projects in fields outside education (e.g. job creation schemes) or capital works(e.g. building an outdoor education facility).

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[10] See Australia. Schools Commission, Report: rolling triennium 1977-79 (Canberra: Schools Commission, 1976), p. 66.

From the various sources of information used in this report a large number of possible projects have been proposed. In the following check-list, proposals are grouped according to the objective to which they are particularly addressed.

(i) Increasing educational attainments

* remedial education: the establishment of a remedial clinic for schools in and near Huonville.

* remedial education: the development of a remedial resource centre for the schools of the Huon Valley.

* remedial education: the appointment of consultants in the area of remedial education, to work with teachers in the schools of the area.

* increasing parent and teacher expectations :

  - by providing support for schools in their explanation of programmes and approaches;

  - by supporting the development of consultative structures to involve parents and the community in the schools of the area; or

  - by appointing home-school liaison officers to develop communication links between home and school and to foster community involvement in schools.

* to appoint additional subject specialists to district schools, in order to broaden course offerings.

* to initiate a public relations campaign to boost district schools as "alternative learning environments".

* to provide a broader educational experience and cultural enrichment through supporting excursions, exchange schemes with city schools and bringing cultural groups into the Huon.

* to provide improved bussing for higher school certificate students required to travel to Hobart for Year 11 and 12 schooling.

* to investigate the possibility of providing higher school certificate courses within the Huon area.

(ii) School-work transition

* support for career education projects, including the involvement of parent and community groups.
* funding a support scheme for young people in the Huon Valley who are unemployed.
* to provide resources for the development of work experience and/or link courses in secondary schools.

(iii) New methods of delivering educational services

* itinerant specialists on a "shared area basis" in such areas as music, art, physical education and speech and drama.
* development of an educational resource centre or centres.
* provision of support staff to clusters of schools in such areas as guidance, social work, remedial teaching, librarianship,office staff.
* appointment to a cluster of schools of a counsellor/ home visitor providing vocational guidance, other guidance services, welfare services.
* the establishment of a task force to work with teachers in developing a program to improve literacy and numeracy.

(iv) Development of further education provisions

* support for the development of a community centre at Franklin.
* support for the development of a technical and further education programme at the Huonville High School.
* development of a trade training scheme for young people in the Huon.
* support for adult education at various centres in the Huon.

Proposals lying outside accepted objectives of the program

* research into low scorers on tests of literacy and numeracy to establish the most appropriate ways of assisting such students.
* resources for minor repairs and maintenance of schools either by the creation of a special "works gang" or by authorizing schools to spend money locally.

* developing Huonville town hall and a sports area in Huonville.

* establishing a craft centre.

* appointment of a teacher to Huonville High to accept special responsibility for extracurricular activities.

* beautifying Huonville High school grounds.

* establishment of an outdoor education centre for Huon schools.

8.3 Identification and description of priority projects

The research team considered each of the possibilities listed, in the light of findings from the Huon Study and the criteria indicated earlier in this section. The Huon Principals, meeting as a group, were asked to indicate priorities. There was a very high consistency between the priorities of the Principals and the study team but the following order is that of the study team.

In February 1977 the research team recommended to the Tasmanian Country Education Committee the following seven projects for priority attention in the Huon Valley. The first six projects are listed in priority order.

Priority 1. Home-school liaison officers

In this report attention has been drawn to the below average educational attainment in the Huon. It has been suggested that recommendations based on remedial action within schools be given a strong emphasis in funding projects. However, the project team considers that, on the basis of projects in other disadvantaged areas and from comments by teachers and parents within the Huon Valley, there would seem little likelihood of long-term success without a change in parental attitudes and a deeper community involvement in the education process. This view is consistent with a vast body of research evidence about the crucial importance of parental attitudes in school

attainment. Evidence from the Huon Valley indicates that schools encourage parental involvement and in some cases schools have made special efforts in this area. However, many parents seem to lack an understanding of the school's role and its curriculum approaches, feel inadequate to become involved in their children's schooling, and lack an adequate appreciation of the importance of school attainment for the future life-chances of their children. It is considered that contact with individual families is a necessary part of giving an increased understanding of these matters, especially in the case of the families of children at risk because of their poverty. Perhaps the most important single change that needs to take place in the Huon Valley, as in other country areas, is to raise the educational aspirations which parents have for their children.

The project team recommends the appointment of home-school liaison officers to work within schools on a shared basis. The duties of the liaison officers would include making home visits to explain the role of the school, encouraging greater parental participation and acting as an information centre for apprehensive parents. They could also ascertain community feelings on education and participation, with a view to implementing parent education and parent-teacher projects. It is emphasized that the home liaison officers would need to work closely with schools, be familiar with their approaches to the curriculum and their identification of children at risk. The research team gives first priority to this project but recognizes that detailed implementation should be based on consultation with schools in the area and on advice about the successful home liaison efforts that have been made under the Disadvantaged School Program.[11]

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[11] The following article also provides valuable insights into the work of home school liaison officers: Martyn Clemans, "Miss, You Haven't Been to Our House Yet!" Trends in Education 9 (January 1968): 20-25.

Priority 2. Remedial education

During the study an analysis of the results of literacy and numeracy tests was carried out. The results indicated that the Huon has a lower than average group of students who are 'at risk' in terms of basic literacy and numeracy skills. This result tallies with the belief of the Huon Principals who made increased remedial assistance their first priority. As well as the need for assistance in the amelioration of the problems of low-achieving students it is clear that we do not fully understand the background influences that lead to their lack of attainment during the period of formal education. In view of these considerations the project team recommends a two-pronged initiative to attack the overt results of low achievement and to inquire into the nature and causes of low achievement.

Accordingly, the research team proposes the appointment of two (2) area based, specialist consultants to act with schools in the problem area of the low achieving student. The duties of these teachers would be :

(a) to assist classroom teachers to identify "at risk" children and subsequently to develop a program to assist such children whilst they remain in their normal classroom environment. It is emphasized that the personnel should act as consultants, not as remedial teachers operating on a withdrawal basis.

(b) to inquire into the characteristics of the low achieving students as a group so as to understand and demonstrate the factors influencing low achievement.

Priority 3. Area Resource Centre

One of the proposals originating from within the study area was the establishment of a Huon Valley Education Centre as a base for personnel servicing schools on a

shared-area basis and as a resource centre for the schools of the area. This idea was identified by the Huon Valley Principals as their third priority (after remedial education and the provision of specialist staff on a shared-area basis).

This proposal would seem to have an enormous potential for assisting teachers and schools in the area and is consistent with information gained from the study itself. The research team recommends adoption of the proposal to establish a Huon Valley Education Centre, located at Franklin as part of the Bowmont Community Centre. The basic functions of the proposed resource centre can be outlined simply. An education centre could act as a resource centre for equipment and materials that could be made available to all schools in the area. A duplicating and copying service could be provided and, as suggested by the Huon Valley Principals, it could become a "mini Media Centre" for the Huon area. The centre could also serve as a base for specialist staff appointed on a shared basis between schools and, possibly, for remedial work. The proposed home/school liaison officers and youth support worker could also be based here. Such a situation would promote the cross-fertilisation of ideas and the integration of specialist and ancillary services.

Elsewhere in this section of the report reference is made to the formation of a Huon Valley Education Committee. Such a committee could be based at the centre. The personnel of the centre could assist in assessing needs for technical and further education and act as an information source for services available from out of the Huon Valley, such as the combined children's centre.

Priority 4. Provision of specialist teaching and school support services on a shared-area basis.

A long-standing problem in country education has been the difficulty education systems have had in providing

specialist teachers and professional support to small and scattered schools.[12] There is a need for new administrative patterns and new ways of delivering services to communities outside the main urban centres of Australia.

The conclusions of the Huon Valley study are strongly oriented towards this need. The development of a Huon Valley Education Committee to exercise a coordinating and advisory role has been spelt out elsewhere in this conclusion. The proposals relating to remedial education envisage that the service would be made available for a group of schools. The proposal for an Area Resource Centre envisages the development of new services for schools and the community from a central location in the Huon Valley.

The need for sharing between schools extends further than the matters identified in the preceding paragraph. In submissions to the Country Education Committee and in the list of priorities proposed by the group of Huon Valley Principals a consistent need was seen to be the provision of staff on a shared basis so that an additional range of educational experiences can be made available to country children and the services of professional support staff made available to schools.

The areas identified as suitable for such an approach include:

(1) Specialist teachers
    Art
    Music
    Physical Education
    Speech and Drama

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[12] See, for example: Committee on Education Needs of Rural Areas, The Educational Needs of Rural Areas. Chairman: R.F. Scott. (Hobart: Education Department of Tasmania, 1971).

(2) Professional support staff

Guidance officer (working in District schools, St. James)

Social Worker (for all schools in the Huon Valley)

(3) Other support staff

Bursar/clerical officer (for District and Primary schools)

The range of schools covered by such appointments, the identification of a suitable base and the provision of equipment require further discussion, both by system-level authorities and with the schools concerned. The total appointments made would be heavily dependent on the availability of staff in the areas indicated.

Priority 5. Youth Support Worker

Results from the Huon study show that the area as a whole has a higher than average proportion of early school leavers and a lower rate of retention of students to Year 11 level. The area has a high rate of unemployment, especially among young people (in November 1976, 35 per cent of 15-19 year olds living in the Huon Valley were unemployed).[13] Many who have found jobs are at risk of entering a sequence of short-term unskilled work and unemployment, a pattern of instability. These findings point strongly to the need for a flexible system for meeting the widely differing needs of individuals through the extended period of transition from schooling to work.

The Fifth Main Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Poverty Poverty and Education Australia recommends that detached youth workers be appointed "to provide an unstructured form of continuing assistance", particularly

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[13] See p. 40.

for children granted an exemption from school.[14]

The study group considers that such a worker could provide invaluable assistance for all early school leavers and also help others in the transition from schooling to work and provide creative support for young people faced with extended unemployment.

The research team recommends the appointment of a detached youth worker to the Huon area to work with the above-mentioned individuals and groups, providing support, counselling and information. Such an officer should link with services such as welfare, guidance and community information services. Part of the role of the officer would be to assist young people to take advantage of existing services and facilities that would not otherwise be available in the area or available on a very limited basis: Commonwealth Employment Service; youth support schemes; and further and adult education.

It is envisaged that the youth worker would develop close relationships with the schools in the area but act autonomously. Should a Huon Valley Education Centre be established this may be an appropriate base. In the interim the Bowmont Community Centre or, perhaps, the Huon Information Centre in Huonville would be suitable.

The worker would also need a clear system for support and accountability. The proposed Huon Valley Education Committee would appear to be the most appropriate body since it would embrace both the school and the community.

Priority 6. Provision of Technical and Further Education.

The study group recognises the urgent need to bring

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[14] pp 83 - 85 and 232 - 233.

tertiary and further education to country communities.[15] In part this is in recognition of vocational requirements, assisting in entry to skilled manual and office employment. More important perhaps are the advantages in terms of community education, for example through adult education activities. Such a view is consistent with the emphasis on the need that we have expressed for raised parental expectations about education.

The provision of opportunities for country students to study beyond Year 10 is an important general issue facing Tasmanian education and we wish to recommend that the Education Department establish community education centres in the major country centres (see Recommendation 7 below). These would act as annexes of the community colleges situated in Tasmanian urban centres. In addition, two specific proposals have been received which the research team wishes to propose for support by the Country Education Committee. It is considered that both proposals come within the terms of reference of the Committee's operation because both are concerned with delivering services which, in other circumstances, may be provided by primary and secondary schools.

Proposal 1: that funds be made available to support the development of community education programs in the Huon Valley and, in particular, the establishment of a pilot project to offer an adult literacy program in a country area.

Proposal 2: that a second-chance learning centre be established as an annexe of an existing school in the Huon Valley or, possibly, in association with the Bowmont Education Centre. The project is recommended for funding

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[15] See Peter Goodwin, Unrestricted Access: a central concept. Report for the TAFE Coordinating Committee and the Education Department of Tasmania. Hobart, September 1976. (Mimeographed).

by the Country Education Committee and is seen as offering a range of courses to a group of approximately thirty young people,especially those who are unemployed or have left school early. Detailed costing of the project has not been carried out but the main item of expenditure would be the salaries of the two teachers who would need to be involved. Further details of this proposal are included in this Report as Appendix 7.

Additional priority : Huon Valley Education Committee

One of the best features to emerge from the study so far has been the development of meetings of Principals from all the schools in the area. Such meetings have provided an opportunity for consultation about the study. The group of Huon Principals have acted to establish a Huon Valley Education Committee with a membership involving not only schools but people from the community. It would seem appropriate to recommend that this development be endorsed and provided with necessary assistance.

A discussion paper prepared for a public meeting considering the establishment of such a Committee is included in this Report as Appendix 6.

8.4 General observations and recommendations

(a) The changing nature of the Huon Valley

The Huon Area is a fascinating part of Tasmania. This fascination arises not only from a unique history and pattern of settlement but also from developments that are currently taking place. In a beautiful environment situated close to a capital city new settlers are being attracted to life in the country, often with the additional advantage of access to a city for jobs and cultural activities. This process is likely to become much more rapid with the completion, probably within five years, of a good highway bringing the northern part of the

area less than thirty minutes away from Hobart. The future will see a blend between older-established residents, many there for three or four generations, and newcomers.

The point to be developed in this report is that this future has important implications for educational planning. The northern part of the valley is likely to grow fairly rapidly in population, with consequent implications for the provision of school facilities. Within 10 years the secondary population of the area may be beyond the capacity of a single secondary school. More fundamental is the likelihood that the new settlers may have different expectations about the educational system and different ambitions for their children than those formerly living in the area. They will certainly be looking for their children to engage in post year-10 education and are likely to demand further education provisions in the area or, at the very least, better transport to facilities in Hobart than at present. There is certain to be an increased demand from adults for further education activities. There is likely to be increasing pressure for parental and community involvement in the schools of the area.

Some of the points made in the preceding paragraph are speculative and open to dispute. The basic point can be stated strongly. In a changing area like the Huon it is not enough for the Education Department to plan on the basis of what the past has been or even in accordance with present circumstances. It is also necessary to take account of the changing nature of the area and to plan educational facilities accordingly. This applies both to population trends and to changing parental aspirations with consequences for retention rates and the demand for further education. Further, it is suggested that individual schools need to be sensitive to the changing demands that the community is likely to make of them. The self-evaluation process undertaken by schools needs to extend

beyond the school programme and organisation to commence with an analysis of the characteristics of the students at present in the school and of any changes in the nature of the school population.

(b) The need for coordinated planning

It is suggested that this study and the program which has developed from it has contributed to the increased coordination of educational activity in the Huon. This has proved difficult because the future of the district schools in the area has been reviewed by a separate committee at the same time. However, the study led to principals from all the schools of the area, both government and non-government coming together for the first time. Regular meetings were established and these have been put on a continuing basis. Again, the study has led to the creation of a Huon Valley Education Committee, containing a balanced representation of teachers and other members of the community, drawn from the different parts of the area.[16]

Just as the Schools Commission program is based on an "area", so this committee is concerned to examine the needs of the Huon Area as a whole and not just with the problems of individual schools. Such an approach is seen as being valuable for the overall administration of education in the Huon by the State department and is proposed as a suitable model for other parts of the state.

Many of the problems thrown up by this study lie in areas outside education, let alone the restrictive guidelines of the Schools Commission. For the Schools Commission to stress the value of community involvement and indicate problems in the transition from schooling to work and yet to have guidelines that restrict projects to "primary and secondary education" is unreal. Certainly in a country area such restrictive guidelines inhibit any

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[16] See Appendix 6.

attack being made on some of the most pressing problems facing young people. Inevitably projects reach into the pre-school years, including the education of parents, or extend beyond the day the secondary student walks out of the school gate for the last time.

But the main point here is that there has been a failure on the part of governmental authorities in Tasmania to tackle the problems of the Huon in a coordinated way. Those conducting the study were surprised that most information on the area was held within individual state and commonwealth departments, was available only in unprocessed form, and could not be made available in published or mimeographed forms. After investigating the Huon area we wish to suggest that there is a need to look at any area with severe problems as a whole and to develop a clear line of attack on these problems rather than rely on separate, isolated action by individual departments and instrumentalities. There is a need to avoid duplication of services and a situation where, for example, more than forty workers are operating largely uncoordinated social welfare services in the area. As called for by the Search Conference into the future of the Huon there is a need for planning the development of the valley as a whole.[17] For an area such as the Huon, which has faced severe problems in recent years, overall needs should be examined and a coherent set of programs, extending through all the relevant departments and agencies, developed. Rather than groups doing their own planning and making their own responses to a situation, the requirement is for anticipatory planning and cohesion in approaching and overcoming problems.

In many ways the Huon Valley has already passed through a period of adjustment to difficult economic circumstances. Nevertheless a planning authority for the Huon as a whole is desirable and consultation to avoid

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[17] See Appendix 1 for a report of this conference.

overlapping in the provision of services is necessary. The concern of this study, however, is that a more effective approach by government be developed if future areas develop severe problems, such as the collapse of the industry on which activity in the area is based. The obvious Tasmanian example is that of Queenstown and the likelihood that the mine, on which 80 per cent of employment in the town rests, will be closed within the next few years. In such an event it would not be good enough to then respond to a crisis situation and rely on the separate efforts of individual government departments. Rather, future problems should be anticipated and a planned and coordinated approach developed.

(c) Implications for general education policy

There are three implications of the Huon Study for the general operation of the Education Department.

Firstly, the study has reminded us of the reduced participation of country students in post-year 10 education. As has been suggested previously, part of this problem is one of access and it is recommended that consideration be given to the establishment of a community college annexe in the three rural towns of Huonville, Smithton and Scottsdale. The range of Higher School Certificate, technical and further education courses would clearly need to be limited but the present development of a community college in Queenstown, serving a population similar in size to the other centres named,[18] provides a model for this development.

Secondly, the study emphasises the need to plan educational provisions for the Huon as a whole. This has most obvious implications for the provision of secondary education in the area. The basic value position taken in

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[18] W. Coast 10537; Huon 9859; C. Head 7585; N.E. 7692.

this report was established from the Tasmanian report to the Poverty Inquiry, supporting the development of district schools as alternative, smaller, community-centred facilities. Here the main point is in terms of the projected future of the Huon and the likely need for the area for at least two secondary schools within the next ten years.

Thirdly, those responsible for the development of priority projects in the area would argue that some at least of these have applicability in other rural areas. The basic intention of the Schools Commission Country Areas Program is that projects should serve as pilots for more general adoption. In this respect it is suggested that some of the conclusions of the study are sufficiently secure to prompt immediate consideration for other country areas. Three priorities can be instanced: the provision of remedial education resources on a priority basis; the establishment of youth support programs in recognition of the particular problems facing country children in obtaining work and in being inducted into urban areas when they move to cities; and the need to act in the area of parental and teacher expectations of country children, for example by the appointment of home-school liaison officers or, to use an alternative title, school-community officers.

8.5 Summary of Recommendations

To avoid repetition it should be taken that each of the recommendations carries the introductory phrase "It is recommended that..."

For the Country Education Program

1. The Country Education Committee give priority to the following projects in the Huon Valley, commencing in 1977:

   Priority 1: the appointment of home-school liaison officers to work within schools on a shared basis.

Priority 2: the appointment of two area-based, specialist consultants, to act with schools in the area of remedial education.

Priority 3: the establishment of a Huon Valley Education Centre, located at Franklin within the Bowmont Community Centre.

Priority 4: the provision of specialist teaching and school support services on a shared-area basis.

Priority 5: the appointment of a detached youth worker, to assist early school leavers and help other young people in the Huon, especially those facing extended unemployment.

2. The Country Education Committee provide funds to support the development of community education programs in the Huon Valley, including the establishment of a pilot project for offering an adult literacy program. Further, that the local community be involved in the planning and managing of such programs, preferably through the Huon Valley Education Committee.

3. The Country Education Committee provide funds to establish a second chance learning centre as an annexe to an existing school (desirably Huonville High School) and with a particular orientation to the learning needs of early school leavers and unemployed young people in the area.

4. The Country Education Committee sponsor the establishment of a Huon Valley Education Committee, with the composition and functions outlined in Appendix 6 to this report.

<u>For the Education Department of Tasmania</u>

5. Action be taken to remove the undesirable situation whereby many country students are separated into different kinds of secondary schools at the end of their primary education. This action could be either providing district schools with the resources to retain

all students from the local community or bussing all students to the nearest high school.

6. In view of a likely increase in population in the northern part of the Huon Valley and a consequent likely increase in secondary enrolments, the planning of the Education Department be based on the need to retain at least two schools offering secondary education to Year 10 in the Huon Valley.

7. The Education Department consider the development of community education centres, acting as annexes of community colleges, in the country towns of Huonville, Scottsdale and Smithton to offer (a) a limited range of Higher School Certificate subjects; (b) technical courses; and (c) a range of further education options, including adult education courses.

8. The Education Department consider the results of the Huon Study in developing priorities for other country areas. In particular, that the following be considered for adoption in other Tasmanian country areas;
   (a) a special allocation of resources to country areas for remedial education, perhaps on the model proposed in the study (see p. 151 above).
   (b) the establishment of youth support programs in recognition of the particular problems of country students in entering employment and facing migration away from home (see pp. 154-155).
   (c) the appointment of home-school liaison officers to promote the closer involvement of country parents in the schooling of their children (see pp. 149-150).

<u>For other authorities</u>

9. The State Government consider the desirability of -
   (a) establishing a planning authority for the Huon Valley, to plan the overall development of the

area and to coordinate economic and social initiatives being taken in the area; and

(b) establishing an area authority, charged with planning and coordinating government action, in any area in Tasmania which becomes faced with severe economic and employment problems, such as those arising from the destruction of the industry on which activity in the area is based.

10. The Schools Commission be asked to seek a review of its guidelines to permit the development of projects, using Schools Commission funds, that extend into the pre-school years, give support to young people in the years immediately after leaving school and, in association with the TAFE Council of the Tertiary Education Commission, encourage the development of community-based further education.

APPENDIX 1. THE FUTURE OF THE HUON: notes from a Search Conference conducted as part of the Huon Valley Study (Education Department of Tasmania, Directorate of Services, March 1977).

On Friday, 25th February, a Search Conference on "The Future of the Huon" was held at Bowmont, Franklin, chaired by Dr. Geoff Cordwell from the Centre for Continuing Education, A.N.U., Canberra. Between 30 and 40 people participated, representing a wide cross-section of the present Huon population.

FUTURE WORLD SITUATIONS

Dr. Cordwell opened the meeting by asking people to introduce themselves in small groups and elaborate on their particular interests in the Huon. This was followed by a general discussion, during which the following points were raised in relation to future world situations and problems.

1. Continuing unrest throughout the world, resulting in war, racial riots and civil disturbances, coupled with demands from the third world which are causing guilt feelings.

2. Cynicism about politicians and political institutions and an increasing demand by ordinary people for a say in decision-making.

3. Constant questioning about moral values, religion etc., causing the emergence of counter-cultures and alternate lifestyles.

4. Lack of economic stability and increasing unemployment. This is resulting in earlier retirement and increasing leisure time which, when linked with an increase in life expectancy, means additional recreational facilities are required. This situation is also causing some dissatisfaction with the existing education system.

5. Fast communication is influencing our thinking and the media, by stimulating a lust for bad news, is making the present situation appear far worse than it is.

6. Realisation that the spaceship earth is vulnerable, with resultant concern over energy resources and man-made threats to society, e.g. pollution, over-population etc. (There was some disagreement in the meeting as to whether or not over-population was a problem).

7. Possibility of the emergence of "too many chiefs and not enough indians".

LIFE IN THE HUON

Following a tea break, the group re-convened to discuss the Huon in closer terms. This resulted in a list of good and bad aspects suggested by individual participants (not necessarily a consensus by the group).

Good Aspects	Natural beauty.
	Close proximity to a capital city.
	Better weather than in other "god-forsaken" places!
	Community small enough for relatively easy communication.
	Good farmland.
	A cohesive community, probably due, in part, to poor transport.
Bad Aspects	Cold, wet climate.
	Unemployment - lack of local work.
	Dependence on services from the city.
	Poor public transport.
	Bad roads.
	Insular attitudes.
	Parochialism - lack of support between communities.
	Social and cultural malnutrition.

Poor education facilities
Isolation and gossip

Although a larger number of bad points than good were identified, an overwhelming majority of people thought the Huon was a good place to live.

DESIRED SITUATION IN THE HUON IN 1985

The meeting was then split into four smaller groups and was set the task of deciding on a desirable future for the Huon. The following summary edits the suggestions from these groups into a single outline.

A. Employment

1. A stable economic base is required, though not at the cost of the Huon's rural character. For this reason large scale industry is not the answer.

2. The area lends itself to tourism but it must be done in a sensitive manner - "we welcome people who want to share our way of life". We need to develop small, mixed enterprises, e.g. cottage industries, log-cabin-type accommodation etc. In addition, we need to retain and improve possible attractions, e.g. Ida Bay Railway, Glendevie Airstrip.

3. It was suggested that a good regional water scheme is needed in the area before industry can be enticed. This would mean the possibility of establishing a processing plant for locally-produced fruit, meat and vegetables, which could be freighted to outside markets direct from Port Huon. Strict environmental controls would be needed for this type of venture.

4. The community should make a positive attempt to support local enterprise e.g. local shops, bakery etc. Many of these small businesses suffer at the hands of state-wide or regional monopolies.

5. Farms would need to concentrate on a variety of specialities in order to compete with large-scale operators - "the day of the cocky farmer with a bit of everything has gone". Some farmers have tended to be poor managers in the past and may need to gain more marketing expertise.

6. The possibility of establishing co-ops. should be explored. Past attempts have been unsuccessful due to the problem of certain items of equipment being needed by all at the same time and to individual greed. The alternative for larger farmers is to call on contractors. This could be successful, providing there was sufficient competition.

B. Transport

1. The Huon badly needs improved main roads to encourage industry and tourism, and for improved safety. One detrimental aspect is the possibility of the northern end of the valley more quickly becoming a dormitory suburb of Hobart, with resultant loss of peace and tranquillity and possible loss of sense of community.

2. The waterways should be reassessed for the transportation of limestone and similar materials to reduce the load on existing roads.

3. Improvement to public transport - services need to be geared to prospective travellers, e.g. a housewives' bus at a suitable time for women to be able to travel to Hobart and return, while children are at school.

C. Education

1. There should be more emphasis on practical education and learning for life away from the wholly academic; a return to agricultural subjects in the schools with possible farm apprenticeships to follow. Our children shouldn't

be educated away from their sense of pride in their heritage and environment. They should be educated for a choice of lifestyles, not merely to achieve a particular occupational status.

2. District schools should be upgraded to full high school standard, to allow all kids to complete their education in their own district.

3. The area suffers from a lack of extra-curricular activities, mainly due to transport problems. One suggested possibility to overcome this was to run late bus services one day per week or put on an extra bus.

4. There is talent in the community which could be utilised for such activities (including skilled parents), and this could also be used to enrich the school programme, e.g. introduction of various crafts. At present there is too much idle equipment in schools, due to lack of specialised teachers, e.g. musical and craft equipment. Although many activities have failed in the past perhaps some could now be revived. Our kids have talents and need the opportunity to develop them.

5. This equipment and school facilities should also be made available to the community out of school hours.

6. Pressure should be put on the Department to start on a new technical college south of Hobart as soon as possible.

7. Consideration should be given to the replacement of graded certificates on leaving school, with a character and aptitude reference from individual staff members. Academic levels reached were not always a true indication of the person's aptitude for work or likely continued interest.

8. We need to look at ways to overcome the present idleness and loss of incentive among the young.

D. General

1. The main feeling shared by all groups was the need to retain the Huon's rural atmosphere. Residents want to safeguard the history, sense of community and natural beauty of the area. Future planning should include the underground siting of telephone and power cables.

2. The area needs personnel rather than machines and facilities - we need government-funded people to get things going.

3. Other suggestions were - the construction of a connecting road to the Gordon River to boost tourism; improved TV reception in some areas; the hope that a local M.P. would actually be resident in the Huon by 1985!

4. Present decisions are not based on an overall plan for the Huon. Planned development on a regional basis is needed but who has the right to decide future developments? One group suggested the formation of a Huon Development Council - representative of all three municipal areas of the valley.

Among these suggestions one wary comment was made, perhaps echoing others - "I don't want to change anything very much. I like it as it is. Have we the right to say 'I want this'? Most of the noisy ones are birds of passage. They make us uneasy and disturbed, then go".

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE

The final task of the evening was for the whole meeting to compile, from all the above comments, a list of "what needs to be done?"

1. Retain the rural atmosphere and protect the environment.

2. Ensure an expanding and continuing viable economic base for the valley.

3. Improve existing roads.

4. Make changes to the education system :
   (a) more emphasis on practical subjects;
   (b) education for learning how to live;
   (c) provision for continuing education for all age groups. This would require a close look at alternative forms of delivery, e.g. concentrated sessions instead of one hour per week, semi-correspondence course with weekend seminars, tolerance of lower than normal class sizes, etc.
   (d) investigation of literacy and numeracy problems and possible new methods of coping with these;
   (e) greater involvement of parents in education. Ways of encouraging parental participation should be explored and thought given to the establishment of parent/school councils;
   (f) introduction of work experience programmes in final grades.

5. Take a close look at transport problems and methods of overcoming these (both in the school bussing system and for the general public).

6. One unanimous feeling was the need to establish a regional planning body to act as a pressure group and to assist with overall forward planning for the whole area. This body may, perhaps, be initially concerned with education and later widen its role to take in other aspects.

Those present agreed that a further meeting should be arranged to take up some of the identified needs.

APPENDIX 2 - QUESTIONNAIRE USED FOR SURVEY OF PARENTAL OCCUPATIONS

1. What is the name of your school?

2. What grade are you in?

3. What is your home address?

4. What is your father's job at present?

   (please say if he also works on his farm or orchard)

5. What does your father do in this job?

6. Where does your father work? (Tick one square)

   - At Home
   - In Huonville
   - In Cygnet
   - In Franklin
   - In Geeveston
   - In Dover
   - In Hobart
   - Somewhere else - (say where) .....

7. Does your mother go out to work? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If you said NO to Question 7, stop here. Thank you.

8. What is your mother's job? ☐

9. What does your mother do in this job? ☐

10. Where does your mother work? (Tick one square)

- ☐ In Huonville
- ☐ In Cygnet
- ☐ In Franklin
- ☐ In Geeveston
- ☐ In Dover
- ☐ In Hobart

Somewhere else (Say where) .....

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP.

APPENDIX 3. OCCUPATIONAL CLASSIFICATION USED IN THE STUDY

In this study occupations were initially classified according to the three-digit code of the Australian Bureau of Statistics. This was then collapsed to a 16-point scale according to the method outlined in the A.C.E.R. Data Processing Bulletin on the subject. A further reduction to a 9-point and 4-point scale is broadly consistent with this Bulletin.

Occupation	16 Point	9 Point	4 Point
Upper professional	1	1	1
Graziers	2	2	
Lower professional	3	1	
Managerial	4	3	
Self-employed (shop prop.)	5		
Other farmers	6	4	2
Clerical	7	5	3
Armed services and police force	8		
Craftsmen and foremen	9	6	
Shop assistants	10	7	4
Process workers and operators	11		
Drivers	12		
Personal, domestic & service workers	13	8	
Miners	14		
Farm and rural workers	15	9	
Labourers	16	8	
Inadequately defined/ housewives	17	0	

Sources:

Australian Bureau of Statistics. Classification and classified list of occupations. Canberra: A.B.S., 1971.

Australian Bureau of Statistics. Index of Occupations. Canberra: A.B.S., 1971.

Australian Council for Educational Research. "The Measurement of Social Class." A.C.E.R. Data Processing Bulletin, no. 6, 1973.

APPENDIX 4 - GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS IN FOUR SELECTED REGIONS OF TASMANIA (PRIMARY, DISTRICT, HIGH)

Huon Valley

1. Huonville High
2. Cygnet District
3. Geeveston District
4. Dover District
5. Judbury Primary
6. Franklin Primary
7. Glen Huon Primary
8. Huonville Primary

Derwent Valley

1. New Norfolk High
2. Glenora District
3. Ouse District
4. Strathgordon District
5. Bronte Park Primary
6. Tarraleah Primary
7. Wayatinah Primary
8. Hamilton Primary
9. Ellendale Primary
10. Westerway Primary
11. Fairview Primary
12. Molesworth Primary
13. Maydena Primary
14. New Norfolk Primary

West Tamar

1. Riverside High
2. Exeter District
3. Beaconsfield District
4. Trevallyn Primary
5. Riverside Primary

Eastern Shore

1. Clarence High
2. Rose Bay High
3. Geilston Bay High
4. Warrane High
5. Sorell District
6. Campania District
7. Dunalley District
8. Rokeby Primary
9. Warrane Primary
10. Cambridge Primary
11. Risdon Vale Primary
12. Lauderdale Primary
13. South Arm Primary
14. Bellerive Primary
15. Flagstaff Primary
16. Howrah Primary/Infant
17. Lindisfarne Primary
18. Lindisfarne North Primary
19. Montagu Bay Primary
20. Mornington Primary
21. Richmond Primary

APPENDIX 5. TABLES RELATED TO EDUCAT ONAL PROVISION IN THE HUON VALLEY

ENROLMENTS IN HUON GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS 1970-1977*

Table 1

Kindergarten enrolments in Huon schools 1970-1977

School	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977
Cygnet	-	-	-	-	26	23	31	16
Geeveston	41	39	42	49	44	40	40	35
Dover	-	-	-	-	25	29	26	27
Huonville	70	68	73	92	68	61	55	61
Franklin	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
Glen Huon	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
TOTAL	111	107	115	141	163	153	152	147

Table 2

Primary enrolments in Huon schools 1970-1977

School	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977
Huon Special	-	8	8	13	13	14	12	11
Cygnet	194	162	156	145	129	131	137	137
Geeveston	280	265	261	266	239	238	227	233
Dover	180	163	157	147	119	116	111	109
Huonville	564	522	519	466	492	497	485	485
Judbury	26	29	26	19	24	35	36	25
Franklin	89	90	84	91	86	98	103	95
Glen Huon	44	40	35	48	43	41	40	42
TOTAL	1377	1279	1246	1195	1145	1170	1151	1137

* Source : Tasmanian Government School Enrolments - by Regions
Prepared by Tasmanian Research Branch from July Staffing Returns.

Table 3

Secondary enrolments in Huon schools 1970-1977

School	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977
Cygnet	50	43	32	38	38	34	31	35
Geeveston	45	40	40	41	49	44	39	33
Dover	36	38	33	30	39	32	36	29
Huonville	567	596	600	640	606	636	634	609
TOTAL	698	717	705	749	732	746	743	706

Table 4

Retention Rates* : Year 7 enrolments as a percentage of year 6 enrolments in Huon district schools 1971-1976

Year	No. in Grade 6	No. in year 7	Year 7 as a percentage of Grade 6
1970	96	-	-
1971	92	43	45%
1972	102	40	43%
1973	95	32	31%
1974	77	44	46%
1975	82	21	27%
1976	-	35	43%

*Source : February Staffing Returns - Tasmanian Research Branch.

Table 5

Pupil/teacher ratios : primary schools in four selected regions of Tasmania : 1975

School region	Primary schools	District schools (primary level)
Huon Valley	24:1	23:1
Derwent Valley	22:1	24:1
Eastern Shore	23:1	22:1
West Tamar	23:1	25:1

Table 6

Number of senior staff as a percentage of full-time teaching staff in primary schools : 1975

School region	Senior staff	Continuing Staff	Number
Huon Valley	22%	78%	33
Derwent Valley	35%	65%	58
Eastern Shore	21%	79%	228
West Tamar	21%	79%	33

Table 7

Number of senior staff as a percentage of full-time teaching staff in high schools : 1975

School region	Senior staff	Continuing Staff	Number
Huon Valley	22%	78%	45
Derwent Valley	21%	79%	48
Eastern Shore	21%	79%	214
West Tamar	14%	86%	57

Table 8

Number of senior staff as a percentage of full-time teaching staff in district schools : 1975

School region	Senior staff	Continuing staff	Number
Huon Valley	22%	78%	32
Derwent Valley	17%	83%	42
Eastern Shore	14%	86%	37
West Tamar	18%	82%	39

Table 9

Distribution of teachers by age in primary schools in four selected regions of Tasmania : 1975

School region	Younger than 26 years	26 to 30 years	Older than 30 years	Average age	No.
Huon Valley	27%	12%	61%	34	31
Derwent Valley	24%	25%	51%	32	58
Eastern Shore	23%	19%	58%	34	228
West Tamar	-	36%	64%	38	33

Not ascertained = 2

Table 10

Distribution of teachers by age in high schools in four selected regions of Tasmania : 1975

School region	Younger than 26 years	26 to 30 years	Older than 30 years	Average age	No.
Huon Valley	24%	38%	38%	31	42
Derwent Valley	27%	25%	48%	34	48
Eastern Shore	23%	24%	53%	34	210
West Tamar	20%	38%	42%	33	57

Not ascertained = 7

Table 11

Distribution of teachers by age in district schools in four selected regions of Tasmania : 1975

School region	Younger than 26 years	26 to 30 years	Older than 30 years	Average age	No.
Huon Valley	31%	22%	47%	32	32
Derwent Valley	44%	17%	39%	28	41
Eastern Shore	35%	16%	49%	33	37
West Tamar	23%	3%	74%	40	39

Not ascertained = 1

Table 12

Distribution of primary school teachers by age in urban and rural primary schools in four selected regions of Tasmania : 1975

Type of School	Younger than 26 years	26 to 30 years	Older than 30 years	Number*
Rural	33%	20%	47%	129
Urban	20%	22%	58%	239

*The rural school category includes district schools. The urban school category does not include district schools or several small, non-urban primary schools in the Eastern Shore and West Tamar regions.

Table 13

Distribution of secondary school teachers by age in urban and rural schools in four selected regions of Tasmania : 1975

Type of School	Younger than 26 Years	26 to 30 years	Older than 30 years	Number*
Rural	24%	28%	48%	119
Urban	22%	29%	49%	267

*NOTE: Rural secondary teachers include secondary teachers in Huon Valley and Derwent Valley district schools. District school teachers in the Eastern Shore and West Tamar regions are not included in the urban category.

Table 14

Distribution of teachers by age in primary, high and district schools in four selected regions of Tasmania : 1975

School Sector	Younger than 26 years	26 to 30 years	Older than 30 years	Number
Primary	21%	21%	58%	350
High	23%	29%	48%	357
District	35%	14%	51%	149

Table 15

Distribution of teachers by sex in all schools in four selected regions of Tasmania : 1975

School region	Male	Female	Number
Huon Valley	42%	58%	110
Derwent Valley	43%	57%	148
Eastern Shore	36%	64%	479
West Tamar	35%	65%	129
State*	37%	63%	3684

* Source : Annual Report of the Tasmanian Minister for Education - 1975.

Table 16

Distribution of teachers by sex in Huon Valley schools compared with Tasmanian schools* : 1975

Region and school sector		Male	Female	Number
Primary	- Huon	18%	82%	33
	- Tasmania	20%	80%	1629
High	- Huon	62%	38%	45
	- Tasmania	57%	43%	1510
District	- Huon	38%	62%	32
	- Tasmania	36%	53%	545

*Source : Annual Report of the Tasmanian Minister for Education - 1975.

Table 17

Distribution of primary school teachers by completed years of tertiary study in four selected regions of Tasmania : 1975

School region	Less than two years	two years	three years	more than three years	number
Huon Valley	19%	38%	35%	8%	216
Derwent Valley	12%	35%	37%	17%	52
Eastern Shore	10%	34%	36%	20%	207
West Tamar	13%	59%	25%	3%	32

Not ascertained = 35

Table 18

Distribution of high school teachers by completed years of tertiary study in four selected regions of Tasmania : 1975

School region	Less than two years	two years	three years	more than three years	number
Huon Valley	2%	25%	17%	56%	41
Derwent Valley	11%	8%	29%	52%	48
Eastern Shore	6%	15%	29%	50%	199
West Tamar	5%	17%	37%	41%	57

Not ascertained = 19

Table 19

Distribution of district school teachers by completed years of tertiary study in four selected regions of Tasmania : 1975

School region	Less than two years	two years	three years	more than three years	number
Huon Valley	10%	44%	34%	12%	32
Derwent Valley	9%	14%	29%	48%	42
Eastern Shore	16%	27%	22%	35%	37
West Tamar	13%	33%	33%	16%	39

Table 20

Percentage of beginning teachers in primary schools in four selected regions of Tasmania : 1975

School region	Beginning teachers	Continuing teachers	Number
Huon Valley	15%	85%	33
Derwent Valley	20%	80%	58
Eastern Shore	13%	87%	228
West Tamar	11%	89%	33

Table 21

Percentage of beginning teachers in high schools in four selected regions of Tasmania : 1975

School region	Beginning teachers	Continuing teachers	Number
Huon Valley	16%	84%	45
Derwent Valley	17%	83%	48
Eastern Shore	11%	89%	214
West Tamar	17%	83%	57

Table 22

Percentage of beginning teachers in district schools in four selected regions of Tasmania : 1975

School region	Beginning teachers	Continuing teachers	Number
Huon Valley	6%	94%	32
Derwent Valley	29%	71%	42
Eastern Shore	14%	86%	37
West Tamar	15%	85%	39

Table 23

Percentage of beginning primary teachers in urban and rural schools in four selected regions of Tasmania : 1975

Type of school	Beginning teachers	Continuing teachers	Number
Rural	20%	80%	129
Urban	12%	88%	239

Table 24

Percentage of beginning secondary teachers in urban and rural schools in four selected regions of Tasmania : 1975

Type of school	Beginning teachers	Continuing teachers	Number
Rural	16%	84%	123
Urban	12%	88%	271

Table 25

Rate of teacher loss in primary schools in four selected regions of Tasmania between August 1975 and August 1976

School region	Out-going staff	Continuing staff	Number
Huon Valley	32%	68%	33
Derwent Valley	44%	56%	58
Eastern Shore	36%	64%	228
West Tamar	52%	48%	33

Table 26

Rate of teacher loss in high schools in four selected regions of Tasmania between August 1975 and August 1976

School region	Out-going staff	Continuing staff	Number
Huon Valley	23%	77%	45
Derwent Valley	38%	62%	48
Eastern Shore	25%	75%	214
West Tamar	35%	66%	57

Table 27

Rate of teacher loss in district schools in four selected regions of Tasmania between August 1975 and August 1976.

School region	Out-going staff	Continuing staff	Number
Huon Valley	34%	66%	32
Derwent Valley	48%	52%	42
Eastern Shore	52%	48%	37
West Tamar	27%	73%	39

Table 28

Rate of loss among primary teachers in urban and rural schools in four selected regions of Tasmania between August 1975 and August 1976

Type of school	Out-going staff	Continuing staff	Number
Rural	45%	55%	129
Urban	38%	62%	239

Table 29

Rate of loss among secondary teachers in urban and rural schools in four selected regions of Tasmania between August 1975 and August 1976.

Region	Out-going staff	Continuing staff	Number
Rural	29%	71%	123
Urban	27%	73%	271

Table 30

Distribution of Huon school-leavers by school attended

Name of School	School leavers							
	1973		1975		1976		TOTAL	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Huonville High	148	76%	148	71%	155	75%	451	74%
Cygnet District	8	4%	13	6%	9	4%	30	5%
St. James	15	8%	26	12.5%	20	10%	61	10%
Geeveston District	14	7%	14	7%	11	5%	39	6%
Dover District	9	5%	7	3%	12	6%	28	5%
	194		208		207		609	

APPENDIX 6. HUON VALLEY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

This background paper was prepared for a Public Meeting held in Huonville in April 1977 to propose the establishment of an advisory Education Committee in the Huon Valley. The proposals in the paper were accepted by the meeting.

Background

In mid 1976 the Australian Schools Commission gave a special grant to the Education Department to conduct a study of education and opportunities for young people in the Huon Valley. The study was completed in the period from September last year to the end of March and a final report is at present being written. One of the important outcomes of the study has been recommendations to the committee responsible for the spending of $218,000 of Schools Commission funds on educational projects in selected country regions in Tasmania. The idea is that this money be used to fund pilot projects that may be adopted more generally in country areas at a later date.

One of the best features of the study has been the close liaison which has been developed with the principals of all the schools in the Huon. The principals have met on a monthly basis during the study and have given invaluable assistance both through their advice on the conduct of the study and through defining what they see as being the most important educational needs of the area as a whole. As the person responsible for the study may I express formally my appreciation of the role the group of principals has played.

I think the principals have found it valuable themselves to meet as a group and look at the needs of the whole area. But it is to their credit that they felt that a group looking at overall needs should be wider than school principals. The proposal for an Education Committee representative of both schools and the community came from the principals and with their unanimous support. The proposal has since been strongly endorsed by the Country Education Committee.

It is in this context that a public meeting has been called. This meeting is seen as giving the opportunity for general discussion of the proposal and, if the idea is supported, as assisting in the formation of a Committee.

Proposed functions

Advisory education committees have previously been established in other centres in Tasmania : Burnie, George Town, and Penguin can be mentioned. They are seen as an important means of increasing the involvement of the community in education and of bringing about discussion of educational needs jointly by teachers and members of the local community. The advice is likely to be valuable to the schools in the area and, in some ways, to the Education Department administration. In the case of the proposed Huon Valley Education Committee there is, however, a more specific function : to assist in the implementation of the Schools Commission program in the area. The activity of the Committee is seen as extending throughout the period in which the A.S.C. Country Education program is operating in the Huon.

In this context, the following list of functions are identified :

1. In accordance with the needs of the area as a whole, to develop activities and programs that extend educational provision in the area and increase opportunities for young people.

2. To coordinate educational programs and activities.

3. To make recommendations to the Country Education Committee about the allocation of funds available from the Australian Schools Commission.

4. To receive submissions from various groups and individuals within the area.

5. To provide a focal point for educational initiatives and endeavours.

6. To provide for purposeful community involvement in education.

Composition of the Education Committee

In view of its relationship to the Schools Commission program, it is considered that the advisory committee should be appointed by the Country Education Committee which is the body bearing responsibility for the program. It is suggested that, with one exception, members should be residents of the Huon Valley or working full-time in the area.

It is considered that members should serve as individuals rather than as representatives of a particular group. The following list of members should be seen in this context:

(a) a parent with an infant or primary child attending a government school in the area;
(b) a parent with a secondary child attending a government school in the area;
(c) a parent with a child attending a non-government school in the area;
(d) a person from the business and professional community in the Huon;
(e) a person from service/welfare organisations working in the Huon;
(f) a person involved in local government (to represent the three municipalities);
(g) three persons from the Huon Principals group;
(h) two teachers from Huon schools; and
(i) a nominee of the Regional Office of the Education Department (not necessarily a resident of the Huon).

It is proposed that the public meeting nominate members from categories (a) to (e) above and recommend to the Country Education Committee that they be appointed to the advisory committee. It is proposed that the teachers be nominated by the Huon Teachers Association and the principals by the group that has been meeting over the past few months. It is envisaged that the Country Education Committee would approach local councils about category (f).

The meeting may consider it desirable to add a member who is not a parent but is interested in education in the area as a member of the community.

Conclusion

In 1977 the country education program of the schools Commission will be concentrated on the Huon. It will clearly need to extend beyond 1977 in order to be valuable. In this respect the assistance of an advisory committee in the area would be of great assistance.

Two features of the Schools Commission program should be stressed :

1. The projects to be funded are seen as pilot projects : those that are successful can be recommended for adoption in other country areas. Thus the program is important not only for the Huon Valley but for country schools generally.

2. These projects are not a substitute for the provision which the Education Department makes in individual schools. The Schools Commission guidelines strongly emphasize that projects should be developed jointly by a group of schools and should not serve only the needs of one school. Similarly the program is a joint program between government and non-government schools. This "area" basis of the program makes an area advisory committee particularly valuable.

APPENDIX 7

SUBMISSION FROM DR. REX STOESSIGER REGARDING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SECOND-CHANCE LEARNING CENTRE IN THE HUON VALLEY.

The interim report of the Huon Valley study has highlighted the need for the provision of Tertiary and Further Education in the Huon area, but has made no firm proposals.

The report of the Committee on Secondary Education has noted the problems of early school-leavers. They suggested that, "leaving school should not be seen as a final and decisive break with education institutions".

Unfortunately, the Huon area offers no opportunity for education even for years 11-12, let alone at the tertiary level. If early school leavers later wish to return to education, they are forced to go to Hobart. But many of these people are unemployed and certainly could not afford to live away from home.

While some efforts are being made to support the young unemployed, there is no avenue for returning them to formal education. There is a desperate need to provide a second chance for people that the present education system has badly failed.

EDUCATION SECOND CHANCE (E.S.C.)

This proposal is to provide a novel educational institution under the auspices of the Education Department, to make formal education available to the young unemployed in the Huon area.

AIMS

1. To provide opportunities for people who have left school for some time to come back to education.

2. To prepare early school leavers, or people who believe that they have an inadequate educational background, for entry to H.S.C., Technical or other courses.

3. To provide further education opportunities for unemployed young people.

E.S.C.

Initially it is proposed that :

1. 2 teachers (Science/Maths and English/Social Science), preferably with experience to years 11/12 be assigned.

2. Up to 30 students could be enrolled.

3. Basic accommodation, e.g. unused hall, terrapins, be provided.

4. Access to a High/District school to use laboratory, library and other facilities be arranged.

5. For administrative convenience, E.S.C. could be established as an annexe to an existing school.

6. Entry would be restricted to people who have left school for at least a year and students would be selected on the basis of need.

POSSIBLE SITES

1. Huonville - This is the logical choice because it is served by school buses from the whole Huon area and the existing high school has adequate facilities.

2. "Bowmont Centre" at Franklin. The Huon Valley Study has suggested that this become an Education Centre. It is already a centre for leisure and craft activities.

3. Geeveston - annexed to the District School.

While both '2' and '?' have the great advantage of providing educational opportunities in small centres where there is little presently available, they have the disadvantage of having no transport connection with Huonville. This could be overcome if the project was equipped with a small bus. This would also mean that groups of students could be taken to use other educational facilities, not only in the Huon but also in Hobart (a 1-hour drive). Tnis would be of tremendous value.

While the Huon Valley study has made several worthwhile proposals, they are all of a long-term nature and could not be expected to produce results in less than 3-5 years. Meanwhile most of those who have suffered educational disadvantage over past years, are left in the Huon. Many of the younger ones are unemployed. They should not be passed over - it is not too late. What is desperately needed is a way of providing these people with a second chance at education, right now!!

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